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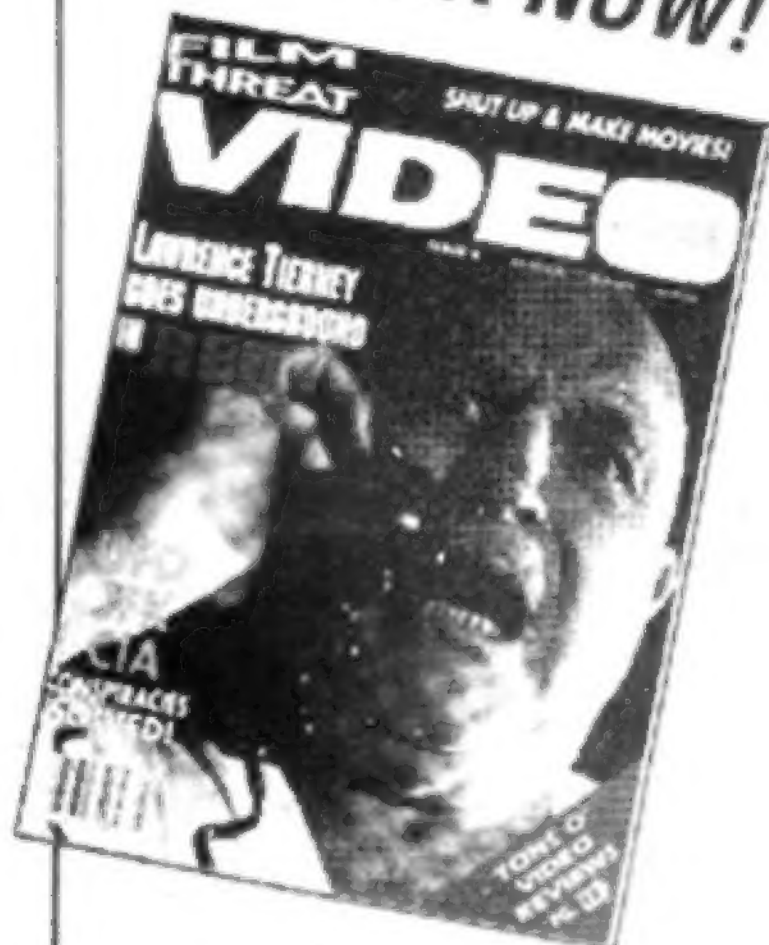
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R. KERN AND HIS SUBJECTS—HOLLY ADAMS,

TOMOYO AND MARIA KAZARINOV

PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEVINE

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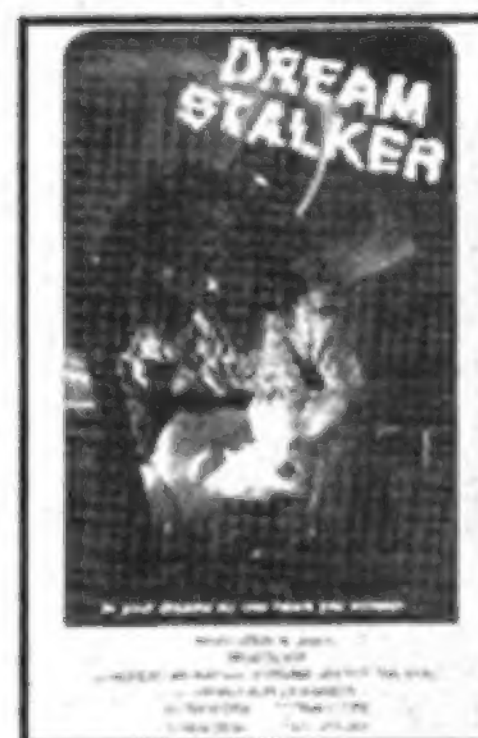
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SUFFER THE CHILDREN

RE; PROCURING A COPY OF NEKROMANTIK I
DEAR MUTANTS,

ENCLOSED YOU WILL FIND \$35.02 THAT I
STOLE FROM MY CHILDREN'S LUNCH MONEY.
SINCE THEY GET BREAKFAST FREE AT THE SCHOOL
THEY GO TO I'M SURE THAT THEY WON'T MISS
LUNCH FOR A MONTH OR SO SO THEIR FATHER
CAN SATIATE HIS NEKRO FANTASIES.
IF THEY ARE REAL GOOD I MIGHT EVEN LET
THEM TAKE THE ABOVE MENTIONED VIDEO TO
CLASS FOR SHOW AND TELL, OR POSSIBLY A
SHORT MATINEE BEFORE NAP TIME.

MOST SINCERELY,

Dear Ray,

Thank God for the Federal school lunch program. You
don't know how happy I am that my tax dollars making
it possible for you to forgo your parental responsibilities
and rot your head with visions of necro trash.

NOT Sammo Hung?



A POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTOR?

Dear Mr. Williams,

I am somewhat of a newcomer to the world of film reviewing, but
have heard from a drunkpunk psychotic I know by the name of Graham Rae that you
pay extremely well (over £100 a review!) for any material you print in your
informative publication. The way I figure it, you owe me £300 for the excellent
material enclosed within (you have never seen such reviews! your heart will a-
flutter with joy and serenity!) and I will take this sum of cash in Brazilian
bank bonds (the ones that can only be redeemed in Iraq). Failure to pay up will
result in the death of your household pets. I do hope things don't have to get
nasty, don't you? Read and enjoy...

Jack Shit

Jack Shit
37 Napier Place
Bainsford
Hell
Scotland

Dear Jack,
Loyal contributor
Graham Rae is an
accomplished liar.
Sadly, FTVG isn't rich
or able to fork out top (or
even bottom) dollar for
articles. What do you
think the word
"contributor" in the
masthead really means?

KUNG FU SNAFU

Dear Editor,

I must take you to task over a couple of errors in
your video supplement's otherwise fine Asian
cinema section, however.

First off, whoever the guy is in your lead photo,
he is NOT the renowned film star and director
Sammo Hung, as you billed him. Perhaps he is Buddy
Hackett in Oriental makeup. Mr. Hung is a good 15
years younger and 50 pounds stockier.

Sincerely,

Colin Covert
125 Portland Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55488

Dear Colin,

Like several other readers, you are correct. The fat guy pictured
in issue #3's Jackie Chan article is not Sammo Hung.
Unfortunately, our research staff often has to rely on
questionable sources. The responsible person (Rowdy Yates) has
been fired for his incompetence.

AS IF I'M NOT CURSED ENOUGH

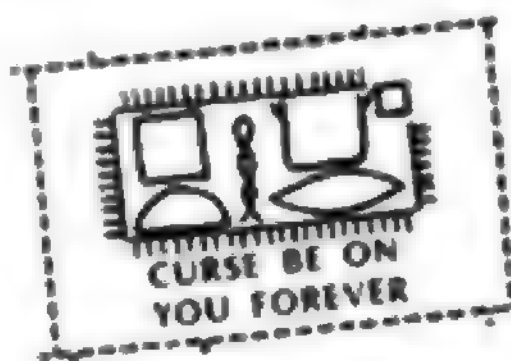
To: Dave Williams:

Dave:

It's obvious that Dave Parker is a hack in the worst way for his review of BAD FILMS last issue.

To spend the whole 4 sentence "review" suggesting alternate titles for the film that I worked hard to produce over a three year period just shows that you are like sniveling hyenas. Dave Parker obviously didn't hear Dave Williams description of the short WAKE UP YOU HUM (in BAD FILMS): that it is "the meanest piece of filmmaking I ever saw."

So for those reasons, Dave, that I condemn your lack of journalistic integrity and doom you to your fetid world.



A curse be on you forever.

Sincerely,

Jim Zucker
M. Zucker

Dear Jerry,
My integrity? Are you suggesting I should tell my critics how to think? The "Bum" segment was funny, but lasted only ten minutes out of an otherwise unbearable sixty. Take your lumps and like it.

SORRY, BUT THE PROOF IS IN

Dear Chris,

On a more serious note (regarding David E. Williams expose of Chas. Balun): Man, all I can say is I'm shocked as well as saddened. I had always believed that Chas. was a good-hearted soul. It's bad enough when filmmakers get burned by Tinsel-Town's "mainstream" distributors (aka SHARKS), but to find out that a guy like Chas. Balun is out there perpetrating such low-life behavior is downright hard to take.

Is it possible this is some sort of mistake? In any event, let us hope that it gets straightened out and that the money (some of it, at least) ends up going to those filmmakers who scrimped and saved their nickles and dimes ~~working~~ and busted their butts working mindless, dead-end jobs to get their films made.

Say it ain't so, Chas.

Regards,

Kirk Alex
Kirk Alex

Dear Kirk,

We didn't believe it at first either, but got the hard evidence just before press time last issue. After this issue, there should be no doubt in your mind. And save the sadness for the people Balun is still ripping off.



Dear David,

Just want to drop a line back to you saying "THANKS" KEEP UP TH' GOOD WORK, etc.

SA

STEVE HAS THE ANSWERS

Dear David,

As a newcoming reader to the Video Guide, I felt strongly driven to write my dimes worth about Issues 3 and 4's growing crusade against underground video bootlegging, which has taken a very ugly and disturbing turn when it comes to viciously slugging horror magazine journalist legends Donald Farmer and Chas. Balun and vowing to severely thrash any of their fans and supporters whether they're male or female, which sounds more to me like personal jealousy because Tony Timpone, Tom Skulan, Eric Caidin, and Michael Weldon aren't your close friends.

The real focus of all the slugging should be directed at all the wimpola film distributors and mainstream video companies that are too chickenshit to properly release the likes of MEET THE FEEBLES, DEMONIA, CANIBAL HOLOCAUST, and BUILT IN THE HEAD to the many fans that are craving to view so many of these excellent genre films, and always use insufferable release date rescheduling and financial copyright ownership as their pathetic excuse, which drives one to obtain bootleg tapes and/or sell bootlegged copies in the first place.

Sincerely,

Steven Millan
Steven Millan

Dear Steve,

While being close friends with the afore mentioned may be a personal goal of yours, I'll slag anyone (male or female) who deserves it. It bugs me that Fangoria's Weekend of Horrors is an unchecked mecca for bootleggers, that Caidin supports the likes of Balun and that Weldon won't take a stand on anything that might ruffle his advertisers, but I won't lose sleep over it. As for pressuring legitimate distributors to carry these films—what do you think WE'RE doing? Stay tuned.



EXPLAINING COLOR TO THE BLIND

JOURNALISM IS THE REPORTING OF factual information via the media, and is an activity that shouldn't rely on assumption or innuendo. But, unfortunately, not everyone sees it that way.

In the latest issue of the *Gore Gazette*, editor Rick Sullivan castigated Chris Gore and myself for our efforts to publically accuse Chas Balun of bootlegging, specifically Jorg Buttgerit's film *Nekromantik*—for which FILM THREAT has the domestic rights. In essence, Sullivan chided us in print as hypocrites—assuming that we had also dabbled in video piracy to keep this magazine alive, as he does for his own.

Untrue. False. Unfounded.

Everyone has a right to their opinion, but Sullivan's was outside the realm of fact. Despite his accusations, FILM THREAT has never participated in the bootlegging of videos as a means of financial solvency.

After calling and explaining this to Rick, we soon reached a state of "mutual disagreement." Sullivan accepted the fact he wrongfully accused us, but was unconvinced that bootlegging is outright thievery, as we define it.

Soon after, we got a check in the mail from Rick—with an order for our tapes—so I have to assume he understands our argument at some level.

But despite numerous calls and letters supporting us, most people in the underground don't think as we do. They are so-called "fans" like Marc Heuck of Ohio, who wrote to say, "You can wait for some amalgam of Donald Trump and R. Kern to release this stuff, but I want this shit now! And I don't care how I get it."

More reactions ranged from Kirk Aie's demand that the money "end up going to those filmmakers who scrimped and saved their nickels and dimes and busted their butt working mindless, dead-end jobs to get their films made," to Steve Millian's terse warning that such accusations and counter accusations would lead to "a violent and pointless civil war in the cult/genre magazine universe."

Fortunately, "pointlessness" has never been a good reason to abandon an argument—especially when you're not only right, but pissed off. But the problem is, how can we convince *you* of that without sounding

like a bunch of bed-wetting crybabies?

By letting the only people who really matter, the filmmakers in question, make their own case.

David E. Williams
Editor-in-Chief

From *Nekromantik* producer
Manfred Jelinski:

Dear Dave,

Enclosed you'll find my correspondence with Mr. Chas Balun when I found out that he is selling our products without permission. I think it would be interesting for you to read it and, of course, as you're concerned as well and the last letter is obviously addressed to you.

Maybe you can imagine how I feel. I'm so angry, sick and tired about all this, that I'm really helpless in finding words to express it. You see, Chas Balun was a very important person for us over many years. He seemed to be an incorruptible, competent and responsible authority of horror journalism, and at least, a friend. And now this. How can you explain color to a blind man? What should I tell Chas about honesty and dignity? Why make films? Only to support bootleggers and "friends?"

If you will, please do it, if you have the power—make him responsible. In your interest, in our name, with our support, chase him to the end of the world. It maybe will help me in my boundless disappointment and anger.

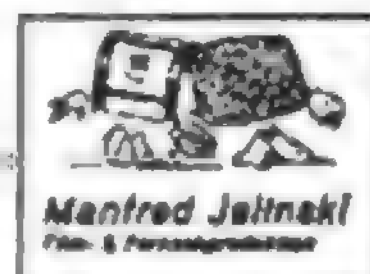
If you want, print this correspondence so everyone can see what kind of man our admired *leader* is. You know good filmmaking is incredibly expensive. Why should I take the risk for someone else's profit and a kick in my ass?

—Manfred Jelinski



BETRAYED:

The Filmmakers Respond To Bootlegging Balun



Dear Chas Balun,

We still remember that it was you who helped us a lot in promoting our works internationally. Thank you very much. Of course we understand that you want to make some profit out of this. [However], we recently saw the advertisements in your *Deep Red Connoisseur Film Collection* flyer [for our film *Nekromantik*].

As you know, we have a contract with FILM THREAT to sell our films and merchandise in the U.S.A. They will (naturally) defend their rights and, of course, we will support them because it is in our interests. The whole situation is needlessly annoying, because you could have made a contract with us as well. Unfortunately you never asked us and we obviously feel ripped off [after] reading this latest news.

German horror fans would be very interested to hear that you are bootlegging our works. Your name (because of your highly rated books and articles) is very famous here and I suppose it will cause some loss of your reputation. They will certainly ask if you really need money out of [such] dirty acts and if there is any relationship between your high opinion about some films and your catalog of tapes on sale.

The only reason we sometimes agree with people bringing out films without contracts is if you really cannot get the film in the country and it's kind of a journalists duty to inform the fans. This not the case. You can buy our films nationwide from FILM THREAT. Of course we expect compensation for the tapes that have been sold until now.

—Manfred Jelinski

NEKROMANTIK—New, excellent quality print of the notorious German cookie tosser. If you have purchased this title in the past from me and wish to exchange it, simply return your old copy and I'll dupe you a new one FREE!

—advertisement in the *Deep Red Connoisseur Film Collection* catalog

IN OUR LAST ISSUE, WE Exposed Deep Red editor Chas Balun as a thieving bootlegger. Our evidence? A copy of his video catalog faxed to us by concerned fans—complete with the infamous *Nekromantik* artwork and the above description, which was especially galling as FILM THREAT VIDEO was responsible for the “New, excellent quality print.”

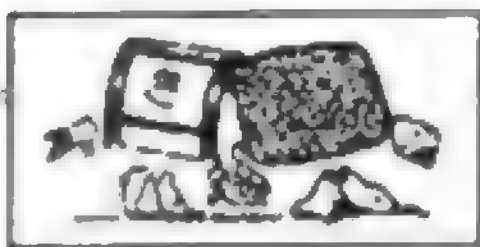
The following is the correspondence that flew between *Nekromantik* producer Manfred Jelinski and bootlegger Balun.



Dear Manfred,

Thank you for your letter explaining the current status of U.S. distribution of your films. Please accept my humble and sincere apologies for this recent development. I was grossly mistaken when I assumed that all NTSC copies of your films were illegitimate, and I was under the (false) impression that FILM THREAT was no longer publishing. Wrong on both counts. Please accept my offer of a free full-page ad in our next publication to advertise and sell your films, posters, soundtracks, T-shirts, etc. and future inquiries will be referred to you or FILM THREAT. All other activities involving “illegitimate” prints will cease immediately. I am very sorry for this unfortunate development and do hope you'll take me up on my offer of a free ad in *Deep Red Alert* #2 coming this summer. Again, my apologies and continued success in the future.

—Chas



Dear Mr. Chas Balun,

Thank you for your letter which we read with great interest. After all, I'm very sorry, but it was not at all very enlightening. There are some questions left and it would be very nice if you can give us some response to them.

1. If **FILM THREAT** or any other would have been unable to sell our films and/or we never found out that you've sold them, would you describe your behaviour as "legal" or "honest"?
2. Could it really be that you forgot the facts about our distribution contracts concerning the U.S. that Jorg had told you about?
3. Who, (because we didn't) gave you a "master" of our films with the permission to duplicate and sell?

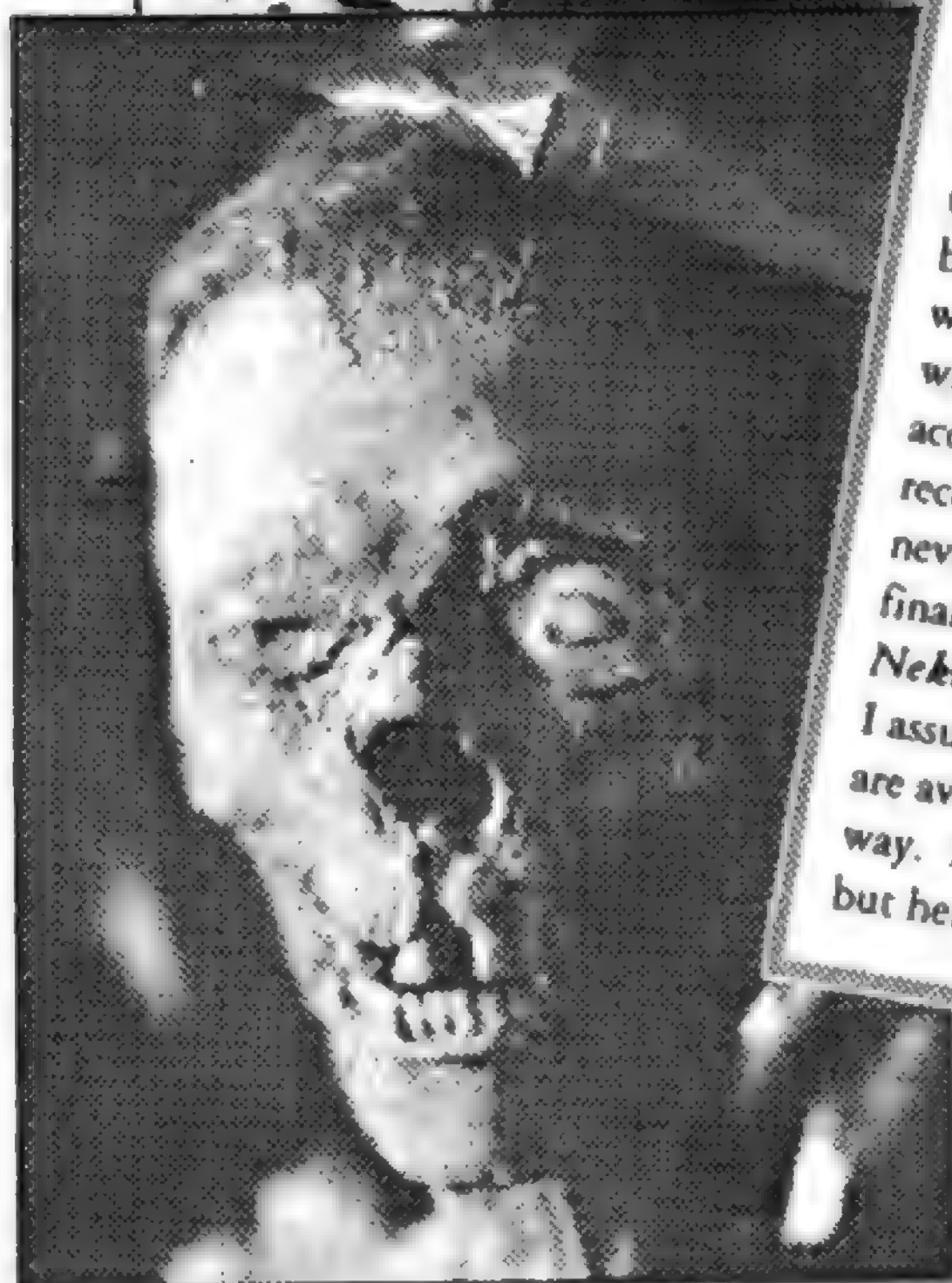
4. How long has this been going on, how many tapes have you sold by now?

5. Who gave you the permission to sell our tapes on that very low level?

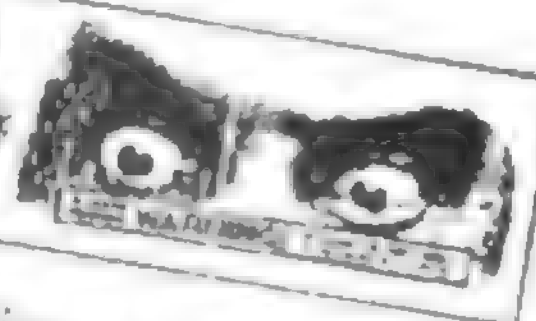
It would be very kind of you giving us a complete response.

Many of our friends in Europe and U.S.A., which we asked about that, (mostly running fanzines themselves), have given us their quotations and their opinions run from "Does he really need that financial support?" (U.K.) to "This is bare piracy" (Sweden) and one in N.Y. promised us to help in finding out any facts we need.

-Manfred Jelinski



**DEEP
RED**



Dear Manfred,

When I last wrote, I was in a very conciliatory and concerned mood. Unfortunately, this was before I read the hatchet job done on me by those pathetic, butt-fucking wanna-be's at **FILM THREAT**. They are scum and I'm very sorry that you believed all the half-truths, innuendoes, outright lies and bullshit they chose to print. Maybe you should ask those fuckwads about selling 4 or 5th generation dupes of *Nekromantik* with crummy xerox covers on cheapshit tapes for \$30. Many *Deep Red* readers bought their tapes and complained to me about the crappy quality. When the customer's tape broke and he returned it for a replacement—they stiffed him for the \$\$. I hear these stories all the time from others who have been fucked over by **FILM THREAT**. Why you and Jorg never took me up on my offer for a free ad to sell your stuff (an offer I made to Jorg 6-8 months ago) legitimately thru *Deep Red* (with all \$ and orders going directly to you) I'll never know. You chose to deal with the quasi-pornographers and punk scumfuck that edit **FT**—a magazine reviled by nearly every one I know. Why didn't you go after all the others who sell "underground" tapes—was it just because I've got a recognizable name and it looks good in print when it's being smeared? Do you have any idea of the miniscule, trivial nature of all this? Do you think I am rich from my ventures? Ask my printer—I still owe him some \$ because my last self-published *Dead Red Alert #1* (You remember the one, where I heartily plugged *Nekromantik 2*) hasn't broken even yet. I pay my writers/typesetters/printers first before I make any \$. Do you ever take into account the thousands and thousands of dollars in free publicity you've received in *Deep Red*, *Gorezone*, and *Fangoria*? Thousands of fans would have never even heard of your movies had it not been for self-published, self-financed 'zines like mine. Do you think they all bought legitimate copies of *Nekromantik*? By the tone of your vaguely threatening and bullying letter, I assume you want me to inform/snitch on my friends and colleagues who are avid fans and collectors whom I've traded with in the past—eh? No way. I don't know how snitches and informants are treated in your country, but here they rate right up there with child molesters.

CONTINUED...

...CONTINUED

I'm also aghast at your attempt to contact your "friends in Europe and U.S.A." and have them join in on the smear tactics before you know all the facts. I also have lots of friends—and all the letters, phone calls and conversations (including those contacting Fantaco Ent., my sometime publisher) have been 100% anti-FILM THREAT. After that bullshit article appeared, support on my behalf has been overwhelming. Many, many people have stories in dealing with Chris Gore and his mutant twin at FT. They are enjoying themselves while they trash various people in the business with each and every issue of their shit-headed little rag. FT won't last. I think it was a mistake to let them handle your films—you were obviously unaware of their past reputation as bootleggers and quasi-porn merchants.

One of my oldest friends and a former publisher of my early books (who also happens to be an attorney) advised me not to even write this letter. As he explained, the burden of proof is not on my shoulders nor is any assumption of guilt without proper arbitration. Why did you choose to tell all your friends and associates the version presented by FT without giving me sufficient opportunity to have my say?

I've also been advised not to discuss specifics—but do you have any real idea of how miniscule the \$ matter is? Do you actually think I make a living doing this shit? I'm a full-time graphic artist—this "horror hobby" costs more than I make from it. So if you would like to smear my heretofore good name across the globe—good luck, bro! I've already received numerous fanzines with scathing editorials railing against Chris Gore and FILM THREAT and I'll make sure you get a copy of a new publication coming out in April that lets me tell my side of the story as well as present many of the facts about FT's operations that you were painfully unaware of.

I am sorry about this mess because it will no doubt affect future relations. Rest assured—I will have nothing to do w/ future film projects of yours nor trade or give away anything I have in my collection of yours. I really have no \$ to speak of so I guess you'll have to be content with thrashing my name across the globe.

Yours truly,
Chas



Dear Mr. Chas Balun,

I received your last letter and I passed it over to FILM THREAT, because, in my opinion, it mostly concerns them. I'm not convinced that I will have any success by presenting the facts again, but I'll do it:

I [was sent] an advertisement of yours, which says, you are selling bootlegs of our film. On this very annoying experience, I sent you a polite letter (some friends say too polite), asking you to explain. Because the answer of yours wasn't helpful to clear the case, I sent you again a letter with questions.

Then, I read the article in FILM THREAT [VIDEO GUIDE] about all this. It wasn't done or affected by me and took me by surprise.

I don't really know why I shouldn't let everybody who is interested read our correspondence. You also sold our tapes to the public. I hope you'll give our correspondence to the public too.

What I got back from you was a 5-page dirty offense, not regarding the situation and supposing that it's our [fault] you didn't [make a lot of] money by bootlegging our film. You should write better articles/advertisements.

How should I interpret your reaction? Was there any need for you to mention that I have to prove your bootlegging? All I read was a letter [which] seemed to be written by a caught child. Believe me, it was a very sad experience for me to watch a formerly admired monument of horror journalism crack and fall in this unworthy way.

If you will tell "the truth" about our problems to the public, please use our uncut correspondence. I hope you will have the courage.

I know it's very complicated for me to charge someone in a foreign country. I think the official distributors will do that. All [that's] left for me is to pity you. As well as I pity me.

—Manfred Jelinski

Sadly, Chas misses the entire point. Guilty of stealing from (now former) friends, he never takes responsibility for his own actions, trying instead to divert attention by attacking FILM THREAT, Chris Gore and myself, the "mutant twin." What he hopes to prove by assailing us in his mag and ignoring his own guilt, is beyond me. NEXT ISSUE: WE TAKE CHAS TO COURT! FTVG

ABOMINATION, THE (1990) Good gore effects in this lame movie!
 ALIEN DEAD, THE (1981) Classic Fred Olen Ray epic!
 ALIEN PRIVATE EYE (1990) Cheesy sci-fi action disco stinker!
 AN AMERICAN SCREAM (1989) Blackie Dammett stars!
 ATTACK OF THE KILLER REFRIGERATOR (1991) 'Nuff said!
 BASIC HOW-TO HALLOWEEN MAKEUPS VOL. ONE (1991) Fun for kids!
 BASIC HOW-TO HALLOWEEN MAKEUPS VOL. TWO (1992) Ten all-new makeups!
 BEASTIES (1991) Space creatures attack naked babes and punk rockers!
 BELA LUGOSI: THEN AND NOW (1991) The definitive documentary on "Dracula"
 BLACK CRYSTAL, THE (1991) Schlocky occult chiller!
 BODY PARTS (1990) Dead strippers are turning up at a nightclub!
 CANNIBAL CAMPOUT (1989) Shot-on-video gore. Hot seller!
 CAT IN THE CAGE (1978) Starring Sybil Danning and Mel Novak!
 CHICKBOXER (1992) Teenagers vs. thugs comedy! Michelle Bauer guest-stars!
 CHILLERS (1988) Southern trilogy of terrors!
 CHRISTMAS EVIL (1983) Brandon Maggart and Dianne Hull star!
 CREEPOZIDS (1987) Linnea and porn star Ashley Gere get eaten alive!
 CULT PEOPLE (1990) Really neat documentary of directors, stars, etc.!
 CURSE OF THE QUEERWOLF (1989) Cult Super-8mm director Mark Pirro classic!
 DEADBEAT BY DAWN (1989) Cult director Jim VanBebber's classic!
 DEAD GIRLS (1990) Rock n' roll chicks get naked and die!
 DEATH COLLECTOR (1990) Scream Queen Ruth Collins stars in this schlocker!
 DEMON HUNTER (1989) Kenny Rogers' wife stars!
 DISCIPLE OF DEATH (1972) British horror flick starring Ronald Lacey!
 EVIL BELOW, THE (1989) South African underwater chiller!
 GALACTIC GIGOLO (1987) Ruth Collins stars in this alien sex romp!
 GALAXY OF THE DINOSAURS (1992) Awesome animation in this sci-fi comedy!
 GAME OF SURVIVAL (1989) Super-8mm sci-fi action flick!
 GHOUL SCHOOL (1990) Joe Franklin stars. Made in New Jersey!
 GORE-MET ZOMBIE CHEF FROM HELL (1988) Lotsa stupid gore!
 HAUNTS (1977) Cameron Mitchell and Aldo Ray star!
 HE LIVES: THE SEARCH FOR THE EVIL ONE (1988) Shlocky Camp Video!
 HELLBENT (1990) A trip to Hell on the road to fame!
 HELL SPA (1991) It's exactly what it sounds like!
 HIGHWAY TO HELL (1991) Made in Texas slasher flick!
 HOLLYWOOD'S NEW BLOOD (1989) Teen slice-and-dice gore flick!
 HORRORS OF THE RED PLANET (1964) Retitled Wizard of Mars! John Carradine stars!
 HUMANOIDS FROM ATLANTIS (1992) Rising from their watery graves!
 INVASION FROM INNER EARTH (1977) Directed by Bill Rebane!
 JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF TIME (1967) Scott Brady stars!
 KINGDOM OF THE VAMPIRE (1991) Vampire epic from creator of *The Dead Next Door*!
 LINNEA QUIGLEY'S HORROR WORKOUT (1990) Lotsa T&A and gore!
 MAXIMUM IMPACT (1992) Revenge has a new name! J.R. Bookwalter directs!
 MILPITAS MONSTER, THE (1975) Classic shlocky horror!
 MONSTER MAKEUP (1990) Dick Smith hosts this how-to makeup epic!
 MONSTERS AND MANIACS (1990) Brinke Stevens hosts this 2-hour doc!
 MOUNTAIN FURY (1991) Shot-on-video backwoods thriller!
 MURDER WEAPON (1989) Linnea Quigley gets naked and kills lotsa guys!
 NIGHT OF HORROR (1980) Made in Baltimore shlock!
 ON THE TRAIL OF ED WOOD (1991) Conrad Brooks hosts this documentary!
 PIECES OF DARKNESS (1988) Horror trilogy!
 REANIMATOR ACADEMY (1992) Readin', writin' and reanimatin'!
 REDNECK COUNTY FEVER (1992) Moonshine-swillin', truck-drivin' fun!
 RETURN OF THE FAMILY MAN (1990) Horror in the tradition of *The Stepfather*!
 ROBOT NINJA (1989) Burt Ward and Linnea Quigley star in this Ohio gorefest!
 ROLLERBLADE WARRIORS: TAKEN BY FORCE (1990) Liz Katan & Kathleen Kinmont star!
 SHE-WOLF (1980) Hot babe by day, freak wolf chick by night!
 SHOCK CINEMA VOL. ONE (1990) Doc hosted by Brinke Stevens!
 SHOCK CINEMA VOL. TWO (1990) Popular series with Brinke continues!
 SHOCK CINEMA VOL. THREE (1991) Bloopers, Babes and Blood!
 SHOCK CINEMA VOL. FOUR (1991) B-Movie Makeup FX! With Linnea!
 SKID KID, THE (1991) Super-duper Super-8mm superhero flick! Missouri-lensed!
 SKINNED ALIVE (1990) Scott Spiegel of *Evil Dead 2* fame stars!
 SLASHDANCE (1990) Babes dance and get slashed!
 SLAVE GIRLS FROM BEYOND INFINITY (1987) Liz Katan gets naked!
 THEY CAME FROM FANDOM (1991) Interviews with Joe Dante and more!
 VAMPYRE (1990) East Coast schlocky vampire flick!
 WEIRDO, THE (1990) Cult director Andy Miligan directs!
 WOODCHIPPER MASSACRE (1990) Shot-on-video schlocker! A must-have!
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SCAN

Reviews by Gabriel Alvarez, Dennis Barth, Merle Bertrand, Michael Ling, Dave Parker, Grabam Rae, Paul T. Riddell, Phillip Vigeant, David E. Williams and Sinisa Zuber.
For more info about these and other films, consult our classified section and other ads.

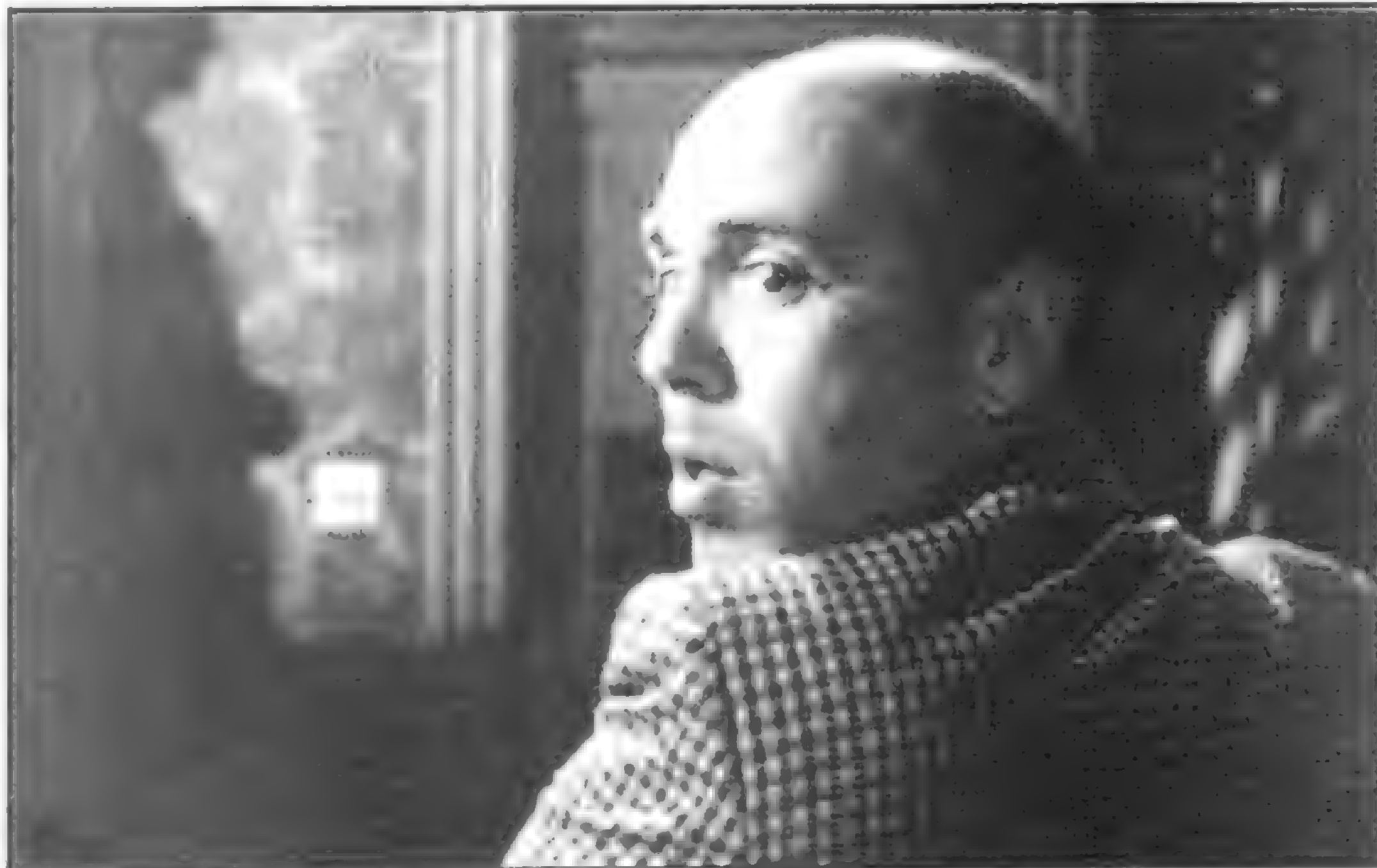
8

THE WALTER EGO

28min/16mm/B&W
John Putsch Prods.

My first impression was that this film was going to be one of the USC-bred morality tales we get on occasion. Why? Because it looked too damn good—too *slick*. Happily though, the first few seconds quashed my initial disinterest by actually making me laugh. The opening scene has an ego-less geek (the titular Walter) getting smacked around by a granite-jawed goon for marring the finish on a glossy Mercedes, which we later find out isn't even his. Cruel humor, I love it! Soon we get the gist of Walter's pitiful existence—shitty life, no respect and a one night stand who blames him for giving her the clap. This guy can't win, but at the advice of his yuppie brother, he soon "gets tough," only to find himself even more fucked.

Director Putsch managed to get half his job done through great casting. Lee Wilkof, who plays Walter, is the perfect neb-bish, yet manages to come across when he transforms into an asshole bully himself. Likewise, David



Lee Wilkof plays that pathetic glimp in **THE WALTER EGO**.

Proval, Walter's conniving brother, is suitably oily.

While the ending tries to provide the requisite plot twist, it works only somewhat effectively, leaving the technically faultless *Walter Ego* a great short, but not perfect, film. However, as the script was by Scott Frank, the same guy who later penned *Little Man Tate* and *Dead Again*, I'm just thankful there wasn't some inane message I was supposed to get—or was there? Happily, I was too busy laughing to notice.

—D.E.W.



THE CINEFEAR SAMPLER

V.1/30min/Super 8
& V.2/40min/16mm
Cinefear Prods.

Finally, some films able to not only piss off the most liberal minded viewer but to give credence to the arguments of watchdog groups who say horror movies can have adverse effects on audiences. From the obviously sick minds of Joseph Parda and Keith Crocker comes *The Cinefear Sampler*, a two-tape collection of numbing, graphic mayhem so

hideously shot and told in such a moronic style it makes you physically ill watching it. Witness yourself the filthy contents of Volume One, which includes the dreadful "De Sade '88," a vile crime against women that is amazingly described as "brutally erotic" by its makers. Add to that "Thanksgiving Day," a cheap portrayal of cannibalism featuring no-frills special effects (a common trait throughout), that exhumes a damnable feeling of gratuitous self-pleasure. Will consumer copies of *The*

Cinefear Sampler come with barf bags? Or better yet prescription glasses, since every scene is out of focus. On second thought, forget the glasses because you won't want to see what's going on.

Much to this reviewer's dismay, Volume Two contained the most shocking revelation of all: a vast improvement in technique and style (although plots remained the same—idiotic). These four 16mm short films are more polished and less offensive and, for these reasons, actually recommended. The

final film, "A Zombie's Tale," is effectively entertaining and easily the best of the entire collection.

—G.A.

6

A PIECE OF SINEMA

45min/Video
Mentor Video

If you're a big fan of The Mentors then you probably already have this video and won't even bother reading this. If not, then this video may make you a fan (though odds are, probably not). Fronted by fatboy drummer El Ducé, the

hood-wearing Mentors are a punk/porn band who are, to say the least, fairly controversial.

A Piece of Sinema is made up of the infamous clip "Fuck Movie," an appearance on Wally George's lame TV show *Hot Seat*, and the music video for the "4-F Club." The "Fuck Movie" is a bunch of bimbos doing sexual favors on the band members and besides the occasional tit, it's pretty bad. The appearance on *Hot Seat* is funny and worth watching, but the real treat here is the "4-F



THE CINEFEAR SAMPLER: Guaranteed to offend.

Club" video. Well-made (especially compared to the "Fuck Movie") and hilarious, the "4-F Club" clip basically saves an otherwise mediocre tape and makes it worth watching. (Unless you are a woman.)

—M.L.

5

EMPTINESS

5min/Video
Jacob Prods.

John Jacob's self-described "poetry video," is just that—empty. "It is not psychotronic, but I hope you find it interesting," says Jacob. Being desensitized by MTV long ago, I thought videos were supposed to contain excessive sexual overtones, as long hairs pretend to play guitar while succulent and slender vixens nakedly cavort across a stage. What we have here is a nice music video (Clapton's "Traveling East" is the selection scammed to accompany the imagery) in which everyday domestic objects are spoken of while

simultaneously shown. So when you hear "sun breaking through a window" you see (surprise) sun breaking through a window!

Emptiness is undoubtedly an NEA wet dream

—G.A.

3

BRAHMAN NIRGUNA

Painfully long/Video
Anubis Ent.

The title of this ambitious video compilation out of Cleveland, Ohio, is Hindi for "beyond the point of conceptualization." Could such a title simply be a misnomer or a prophetic warning? Either way, this series is difficult to slam since you can see the effort that the team of Ken Yakkell, Dave Schmidt and Dennis Petersen pump into this schlocky production. But, let's be fair. Whether it be feeble stabs at fantasy vs. reality (the filler "Blinding Ray") or completely misguided (and dull) political humor ("The Cabbage Contract") *Brab-*

EXPLAINING OUR RATINGS:

10

Perfect! A must for any collection and worth twice the price!

9

Excellent. Definitely worth buying.

8

Great. We're jealous and wish we'd thought of it.

7

Very Good. Would get the filmmaker an "A" at U.C.L.A.

6

Good. But not "very good." Wait until you have extra cash.

5

A few good scenes, but only at the 7-Eleven security-cam level.

4

Dull. But interesting at scan speed.

3

Trance-inducing. Not interesting, even at scan speed.

2

Bad. You have a new blank tape.

1

Sucks! No explanation necessary.

man *Nirguna* is doomed from the start for it aspires to be something that its producers are not capable of delivering. The short entitled "Axe and Ye Shall Receive" probably sums up the tape best in that its attempt at a nonlinear narrative is certainly commendable but the results are like watching a foreign film without subtitles.

—G.A.

7 HAEMORRHAGE TV
120min/Video
Haemorrhage Prods.

Whoa, what happened? Wow man, I must have been in a trance or something. Well, yeah, I was. This sick compilation tape begins with "Trance Warfare," a spellbinding attack of color and sound that twists and turns hypnotically in a barrage of industrial thumping. Other standouts are the vomit laden "Joey and the Babysitter" and "Fun With Nuns." Seeing the babysitter get fried to dust via low-tech video effects and the proverbial "sisters" shoot a *cruel* game of pool is worth the price alone, but directors Rich Feren, Nicholas James and Eon Marshall keep pouring on the gags. More proof that Canada is a funny place.

—S.Z.

3 HUGE: THE VIDEO
53min/Video
The Bollpeen Hammer Artists Collective

What's worse than performance art? Nothing. But this badly taped video of last year's "long-awaited" Bollpeen Hammer Boys reunion performance at UCSB's Campbell Hall is



Monika (Monika M.) astride her "too dead" love interest.

10 NEKROMANTIK 2
100min/16mm
FILM THREAT VIDEO

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT Jorg Buttgerit films that makes them exude waves of nihilistic despair and hopelessness, and *Nekro 2* is no exception. If you saw the first film, you'll know that necrophile Rob (Daktari Lorenz) committed auto-erotic suicide and left this world with a knife in his gut, erect cock spraying spunk and blood as he got off on an ultimate intense death-orgasm. Truly a fitting end to the best film ever made, which is where the sequel comes in.

Budding necrophile Monika (played by the gorgeous Monika M.) digs up Rob's adipoceric corpse and takes it home, only to find out, much to her dismay, that she can't get off on it. So she dismembers the body and keeps only the genitalia and severed head, pondering her arousal problem when along comes Mark (Mark Reeder). A weedy, normal type of guy, Mark nonetheless falls head-over-heels for Monika and is more than happy to indulge her little idiosyncrasies like having to lie still during sex, letting her take naked pictures of him as he hangs upside down from the ceiling—the usual romantic stuff. But Mark has no idea about his amour's corpse-fucking aspirations and would run a mile if he knew of the plans she had for him.

Needless to say, everything doesn't end up happily, and Monika and Mark's final lovemaking scene ends up in a sanguinary climax tableau that easily ranks amongst

the most perverse scenes ever committed to celluloid. There's even a neat little twist at the end that boggles the mind. And if Buttgerit decides to continue his 'leichenfick' (corpse-fuck) series it'll be *extremely* interesting to see what he can come up with. Won't be easy, though—maybe a baby *Nekro*?

Stylistically, the film is extremely well made, every frame tainted with an atmosphere of utter black depression, and visual jokes abound for those sharp enough to spot them. Buttgerit even gets a chance to continue his penchant for parodying films-in-his-films (this time it's a piss-take of *My Dinner With Andre* called *My Breakfast With Vera*), a trait carried over from both *Nekromantik* and *Der Todesking*, his two previous films. The soundtrack for the first film is beautifully reworked and added to, so fans of the excellent music of John Boy Walton (!), Daktari Lorenz and Mark Reeder won't be disappointed.

The only problem I had with the film was the fact that some scenes dragged on for far too long—the pacing could have been a lot snappier if some scenes had been trimmed or eliminated altogether. But, apart from that, ah fuck, I liked it. It takes a couple of viewings to grow on you, but grow on you it will, like corpse-mold. It should also get an award for best ad line of the year: "The Return of the *Loving Dead*."

The *Nekromantik* films are a way of life and as such I'll say this about the sequel: *dead* fucking good.

G.R.

**TAKE A BREAK
FROM THE
BLOOD
AND GORE!**

QUEST

FOR THE MONKEY GOD

IN THIS FARCICAL adventure-comedy, renegade Oriental monk Lame Duck seeks the Patched Monkey of Arquette, an ancient artifact that promises immortality. The Monkey, however, has fallen into the hands of the ravishing Kit Kane. Kit will do anything to stop Duck's maniacal plans, even if it means working with the gun-wielding, egomaniacal mercenary Carl Miller. From poisonous snakes to hard-hitting fist fights to deadly swordplay, Kit and Carl risk everything in their **Quest for the Monkey God**.

Running Time: 74min.

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GLITTER GODDESS. Above: Liana Lloyd, as her own butch mother, Gerry Lloyd, poses seductively with Bulldozer Dee (Diane Nelson). Right: Liana as the goddess in full bloom.



possibly worse than attending the aforementioned lame event (that some unfortunate souls actually paid to see). The only thing worth a rat's ass on this thing are some jams performed by the music group Black Clothes Pointy Shoes. Even the enticing prospect of smashing various household appliances falls flat on screen. *Huge* bites the big one.

—G.A.

liantly. Constructed from extensive Super 8 home movie footage, cheesy (yet effective) recreations and insightful snippets from the many talk shows Liana and her mother appeared on (Thanks Merv, Oprah and Phil!) during the relatively open Seventies, the film begins in 1952 with her birth. While Mom and Dad appeared to have the perfect Cold War marriage, her gradual loss of interest in child rearing and growing fascination with other women mixed with his occasional bouts of schizophrenia form a volatile brew of familial friction. Liana grew up in a household peppered with various "surrogate aunts" and alcohol fueled fisticuffs. While many a youth might have faltered under this onslaught of mixed messages, Liana proved a survivor with a need to be her own person, by her own decisions, as

opposed to the one her domineering mother so desired. As she grows older, we watch Liana blossom into a glitter rock scenester, driven by her drug-addled worship for Alice Cooper, only to finally accept her legacy as the daughter of an openly lesbian woman and form Children Of Gays, an organization devoted to developing public awareness that gay families exist and thrive. While *Glitter Goddess* could of become bogged down in self-pity and melodrama, Liana Lloyd infuses enough humor and selflessness to make it a personal triumph.

—D.E.W.

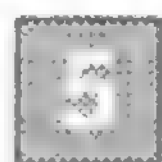
by the title alone. But for the record: Harold Kunkle (typical nerd name), played by sometime MTV personality Toby Radloff, is constantly picked on (typical nerd occurrence) by everyone around him because of his funny clothes (typical nerd garb) and his comic book collecting (typical nerd hobby). Kunkle continues his pathetic existence until he finally can't take it any more and goes over the edge. So after you sloth through the geriatric pace of *Killer Nerd*, watching an extremely dull guy act real annoying, you get some decent special effects (including an exploding head that garners the only real laugh in this whole thing since it looks so fake) and then it's over. The only thing worth noting is that Radloff could have a future as a young Larry Bud Melman.

—G.A.

8 GLITTER GODDESS OF THE SUNSET STRIP

120min/Super 8 & Video
Warped Humor Prods.

The best (and only) high camp, auto-bio-docudrama about the trials and tribulations of growing up during the 50s and 60s with a domineering, butch lesbian mother I've ever seen. Liana Lloyd's epic *Glitter Goddess* not only informs and entertains, but does so bril-



KILLER NERD

90min/Video
Riot Pictures

If you want surprises, don't bother watching *Killer Nerd*. You can guess the entire movie just

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8

DARKNESS
VISIBLE

97min/35mm

Mutual General Ent.

When I read the material for this video I was skeptical. For instance, on the submit form, they spelled both the title (*Darkness Visible*?) and the "host's" name (David Caradon?) wrong. That's "Carradine," a last name anyone associated with horror should be able to spell correctly, or so I thought. Putting these prejudices aside I popped in *Darkness Visible* and was pleasantly surprised. There are four (not three as stated on the info sheet) short stories here and all of them are good—focusing on women and their love of worms, dead pets, nuclear bombs and driving people crazy, respectively. Most of the stories leave you feeling uneasy after watching (but that could've been the Jagermeister I was drinking, also). All in all, not a bad way to spend an hour and a half—drinking Jagermeister that is. The movie is definitely worth watching.

—M.L.

7

BACKGROUND
BOY

30min/16mm & Super 8

Beef Prods.

While Utah may not be a hotbed of subversive filmmaking, Farmington-based cineaste Joe Judd proves that big city dwellers don't have any monopoly on grungy creativity. A collection of six films, this tape features oft times funny looks at the sad world of *machismo*. "Johnny In Gangsterland" offers a would-be tough

who is ultimately humiliated by the real thing and resorts to a suicide solution in the classic "piece of broken mirror in the wrists" manner, "Robert TA2" stonically documents an inky branding of a feeb trying to buy his way into manhood, and "Background Boy" is an MTV style take on the male submissive—characterizing strong women as cartoon dykes. While all of this could be misinterpreted as a typically pathetic urinal of self-doubt inspired fantasy, the capper "¡El Terrible!" flushes clean by explosively spoofing the empty braggadocio of big time wrestling as the titular block of beef risks life and limb in a chamber filled with ignited fireworks. Yes, really. And it's this over-the-top finale that makes it clear that we're laughing with Joe and not at him.

—D.E.W.

7

THE DEAD BEAT
(Vols. 1 & 2)

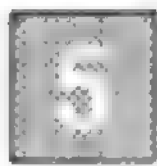
60min/Video

Postmortem

The Dead Beat is a superior video 'zine with substance that excels past the usual, annoying fan-worship of horror devotee dorks who can't get laid. Presented with the professional, high-tech gloss reserved for network TV, Rod Reed and Anthony C. Ferrante's *The Dead Beat* will undoubtedly be in the video collections of *Fangoria* disciples. But don't let that scare you. Pick up either volume and enjoy a worthwhile hour of well-edited profiles on some of the top names in the horror genre. Some of the highlights of volume one

include interviews with special make-up effects artist R. Christopher Biggs (*A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child*), *Famous Monsters* magazine creator Forry Ackerman and a detailed look at the two *Phantasm* movies. Volume Two contains pieces on KNB EFX Group, Screaming Mad George and Steve Wang's *Guyver* (now known as *Mutronics*) as well as a great *Re-Animator* tribute.

—G.A.



GORILLA FARMING

82min/Video
Primote Prods.

I have to admit about being pretty psyched to watch this tape. It's box has marijuana leafs all over the front and the synopsis, which makes absolutely no sense, alludes to the fact that this tape might have something to do with growing pot. Well, believe it or not, I'm one of the few guys at FILM THREAT who even knows how to roll a doob, so this tape should have been right up my alley.

So, I hate to say it, but *Gorilla Farming* pretty much sucks. What it boils down to is a "how to" tape on growing marijuana. In between the growing lessons is this really stupid comedy that didn't even make sense when I was loaded. In fact, being stoned just makes the film seem longer, not funnier. The bottom line is that if you want to grow your own pot (and prices being what they are, that might not be a terrible idea), then there are a number of tapes to

check out in the back pages of *High Times*. And, if you're looking for comedy, rent something funny, like *V.I. Warshawski*.

—D.P.

3 THE BEST OF THUNDERBIRD THEATER

30min/Video
C. Furoy Prods.

What a waste of time! This collection of shorts is so bad it's an embarrassment to Buffalo Public Access, and it's usually pretty hard to embarrass public access channels. This so called "best of" starts with "Deuteronomy," which is about two lesbian nuns and a psycho priest with a thing for altar boys. This runs about 30 minutes, which is about 29 minutes too long. The other stories are about an underground abortion doctor and a couple of homosexual country bumpkins. Fun stuff, huh? This thing is so bad I'd barely consider using it for a blank tape, but I guess there has to be some reward for sitting through this.

—M.L.



DREAM MAN

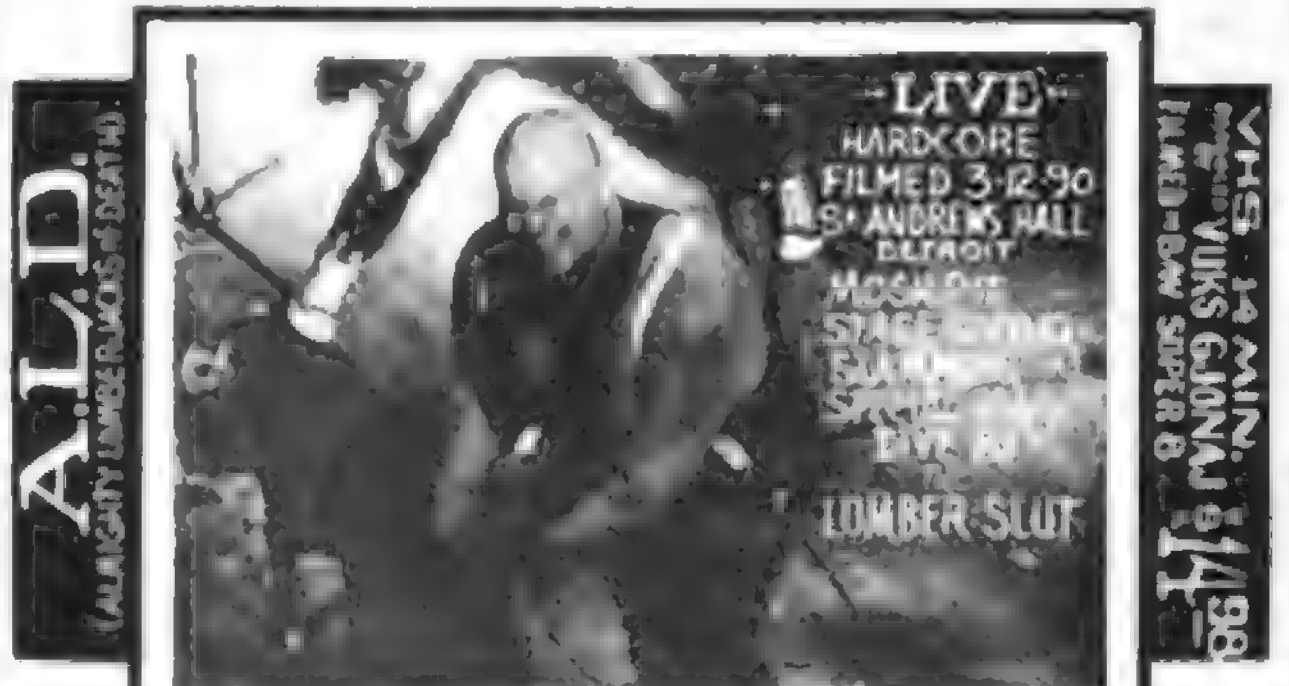
90min/Video
Out & About Pictures

Apparently, *Dream Man* is a famous gay play that has been playing around various cities for awhile. Sometimes, plays have a hard time translating to the screen (Disney's *Noises Off* is the most recent disaster that comes to mind), but the producers made a shrewd marketing decision on this one and just shot the damned thing as a play.

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Do-gooders go bald in COOTIE GARAGES.

Technically, *Dream Man* looks great. The star, Michael Kern, addresses the camera directly, giving the viewer an intimate connection. I found the story, however, (about a guy who makes gay fantasy phone calls) to drag a little towards the end. But, if you saw the play and enjoyed it, by all means, grab this one. And, if you want to see an interesting one-man performance, buy this tape, 'cuz a portion of the proceeds goes to AIDS research.

—D.P.

7

COOTIE GARAGES

60min/16mm
Whim Whom Prods.

"Think high, think big, think wig!" or so says Detroit native Marcy Hedy Lynn, who freely admits that her Technicolorish, kitsch-drenched comedy is "a hard film to categorize." The director (who's childhood home was actually located behind a wig shop) obviously has a deep love for that crazy store-bought hair, as *Cootie Garages* follows the twisting tale of

Wella Della Dondola, a wigmaker who proposes "wigs are an ornamental extension of the human psyche," and suddenly finds that her magical faux locks inspire lunacy. The secret to their powers? Well, they are made from real human hair. . . shone from the inmates of a local insane asylum! Comedy ensues as these mind-altering creations are unleashed on the tiny town of Espergusto, rendering the unsuspecting population virtually. . . well, totally, bald. The film, like John Waters' 1988 feature *Hairspray*, is a certifiable camp-fest that cherishes an Eisenhower Era that never was—complete with enough bouffant hair, glowing pastels and bad taste to make one long for even more.

—D.E.W.

4

SHINTUE VANGUARD

35min/Video
Shintue, Inc.

A mediocre collection of some simple stop-motion animation, each of the three shorts here are about 5 minutes too long and

since the first two are only about 10 minutes each, that's saying something. "Shintue Vanguard" is the last story and by far the best. "Vanguard" is your basic good guy versus bad guy kung-fu movie. Scanning through this gives it some interesting parts, but hardly enough to recommend it. If you're after good, entertaining animation spend time watching *Ren & Stimpy*, not this.

—M.L.

4

HER DOG SATAN

23min/16mm
Three-Headed Dog Prods.

I'm not sure if this is supposed to be a parody or an homage to the "so bad they're good" Corman-style horror films of the 60s or if the filmmakers just tried to make a bad movie. Either way this movie is just BAD. The film starts with a couple of grungy punk songs played over endless footage of some babe wandering though a (supposedly) trendy nightclub. For people that hate the intro (probably 99% of those who watch it), if you fast

forward the rest it becomes slightly bearable, but only because it ends about 5 minutes thereafter.

Also available on cassette is the soundtrack, which offers some semi-tasty tunes.

—M.L.

6

BULLSHIT 1

60min/Video
Ghent Prods.

Charlton Heston, Jack Nicholson, Rodney King and the cavemen from 2001 all in the same movie? If you said "Bullshit!" then you'd be absolutely right! Director Bryan Ghent has strung together a self-described "exercise in Zen filmmaking"—a collection of shorts most of which look like they were influenced by some very good drugs. If you like old movie clips altered by computer graphics, with a cool soundtrack thrown in, then this is your movie. If you like more *intellectual* films while tripping yourself silly, then you may want to stick to the latest Spielberg video. Although a couple of the segments are really well done, for the most part you can have just as much fun playing with the tracking on your VCR.

—M.L.

7

THE AGE OF INSECTS

90min/Super 8
FILM THREAT VIDEO

Although it simply appears to be the mutant offspring of New Age quackery, electronic erotica and cheesy 50s-style science fiction, producer/director Eric Marano's Super 8 feature is in fact



The Doc gets buggy in THE AGE OF INSECTS.

something more. The story concerns psychoherbalist Dr. Richard Benedict, a medical messiah convinced that mankind's survival depends on its ability to learn the uncompromising ways of the insect. Yes, that's right, insects.

Arthropods. BUGS! Conducting this nefarious agenda under the guise of innovative "treatments," babbling Dr. Benedict utilizes bizarre hallucinogenic drugs and the ministrations his beautiful Indian lab assistant Sehra (Lisa Zane in a pre-*Nightmare On Elm Street VI* role) to transform a juvenile delinquent lingerie heir into the founding father of this insect empire. (Yech!) While *The Age Of Insects* bypasses the gross-out level this description implies, it effectively captures the "mad doctor" mood of such

camp-classics as William Castle's *The Tingler*. Coupled with the extensive use of creepy-crawly insect footage and computerized sexual imagery, director Marano's darkly comic vision is sublime fun.

—D.E.W.

2

DEADLY AMAZONS

65min/Video
Amazon Productions

There are few things that piss me off more than seeing a good idea for a film or a good "hook" totally shot to hell. Such is the case with this annoying chunk of Amazon turd.

What you've got here is a catchy little marketing approach: take three impressively buffed-out, scantily-dressed, reasonably attractive female body builders, cast each as an

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Well, let's hope not in this case, because there's certainly nothing here worth buying. Not unless you're into an hour or so of obnoxiously bad acting, (of the "don't look at the camera, honey" variety), pathetically poor fight choreography, gratuitous and useless video effects, and a bunch of cheesy sound effects consisting mostly of stupid martial arts *swish* sounds and gagging noises.

Honest to God, if I had watched one more dorky guy getting choked to death at the hands or legs of one of these muscle-bound wenches, my head would've exploded! This one's a real stinker.

—M.B.

4

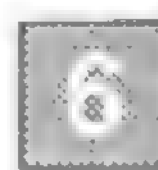
RAD BOYS

35min/Video
Monkeyboy Ltd.

Give Christopher Painter and Devin O' Leary some willing vixens, stained bed sheets and a book of sexual positions and they might grind out a good porno. Otherwise, all

your left with is *Rad Boys*, a lame, shot-on-video tale of a post-nuclear duo of dufuses who spend the entire short killing badly made-up mutants and speaking hickified *Bill & Ted* talk. This writing/producing/directing/acting combo fall flat on their faces one too many times, both on and off-screen (a letter accompanied with the tape asks: "If you like [*Rad Boys*] we'd appreciate if you would tell Sam Raimi and Charles Band—they never seem to return our calls"). Now we know why.

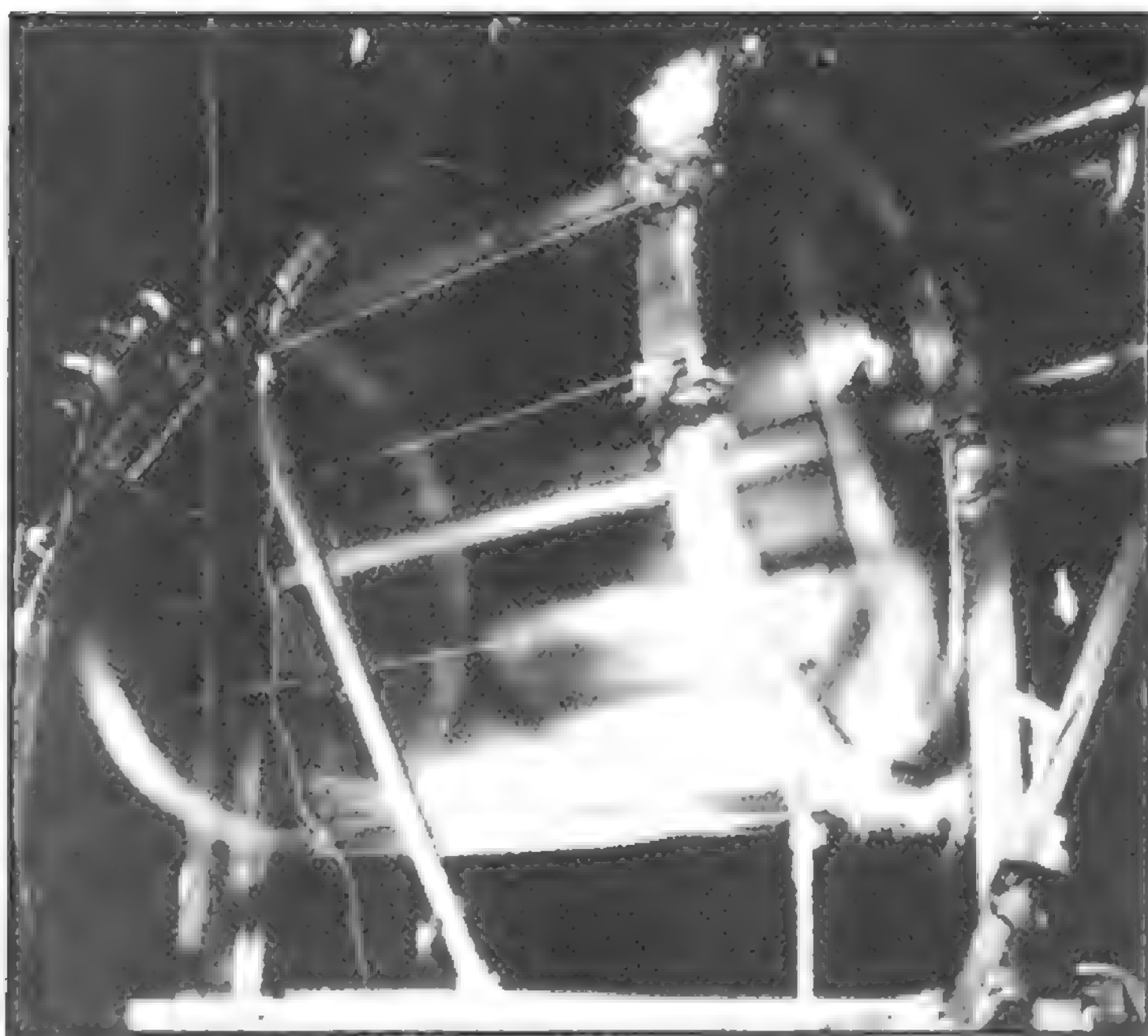
—G.A.



THIS

Interminable/Video
Mister Fantasy Prods.

Drop some acid and then turn your camcorder on. It sounds like something you'd do at a party and not by yourself. But that's exactly what Vermont-based Sean Thomas McGill does in *This*, an amusing stationary-camera documentation of how stupid drugs can make you. McGill pontificates on the meaning of truth, God and his own pitiful existence in an intoxicated and incoherent manner (including babbling philosophy that ends with "I lost it, man"). Unfortunately, he never does



MECHANICAL SOUND ORCHESTRA:
Matt Heckert's aural assault via monstrous machines.

hallucinate. Some of the dialog is funny ("This carpet is synthetic. I'm acutely aware of that."), but in the end it all comes down to whether you'd rather get blasted yourself or watch some guy do it for you. The tape comes with a warning that reads: "*This is not*

intended for stupid people leading unexamined lives." McGill should know.

—G.A.

7

MECHANICAL SOUND ORCHESTRA

15min/Video
 We Never Sleep

This video documents the more recent activities of Survival Research Laboratories co-founder/alumni Matt Heckert as he continues to investigate the nuances of mechanical performance art. Sound dull? Well, if you know anything about SRL's past, you should realize that they have an entirely different take on what constitutes "performance art."

As Heckert was the sound/music coordinator for

SRL, it's no surprise that this solo outing relies more heavily on ideas involving sound and motion as opposed to breaking and blowing things up. However, that doesn't leave things any less interesting.

Heckert's creations, huge, dangerous looking machines that exude screeching, vibrating, ear-splitting noise, are truly something to behold. While handcrafted and precise, they operate in a terrifying manner that left me edgy—just waiting to see one of these screaming steel beasts lurch out of control and horribly disfigure some unsuspecting bystander.

Technically adequate, this tape is a must for any serious industrial music or SRL fan. However, I wish Heckert would again collaborate with director Jonathan Reiss, whose SRL film *A Bitter Message Of Hopeless Grief* marked the ultimate combination of filmmaking and mechanical mayhem.

—D.E.W.

6

MARAUDERS

73min/Video
 The Magic Men

This faulty Australian production is worth catching for its bent portrayal of angry youth gone over the edge. In the first five minutes we see a mother (who objects to her son's collection of dead bodies) whacked over the head with a shovel and a girlfriend beat up and then shot over some misplaced car keys. It's all done so over-the-top you can't help but laugh. The plot is propelled with the "revenge is mine" theme of *Mad Max*, except that the stunts aren't nearly as impressive. Director/producer Mark Savage deserves kudos for downplaying the

darkly witty dialog and for capturing an impressive hit-and-run stunt worthy of any *Lethal Weapon* film.

—G.A.

3

NIGHTMARE ON NEPTUNE & LORD OF THE SHADOWS

100 and 110min/Video
 Pontload Prods.

To be honest, I was apprehensive (and a little pissed off) when I first saw the awful box covers to these videos (I mean full-color glossy packaging of shitty-ass photos, what a waste of money!). The length of each movie also irked me. How can you possibly make two almost 2-hour amateur features with no budget? The answer is simple: get your friends and family to do it with you. So writer/producer Mike Bennet probably gets a big kick out of seeing his chums in these epics, but the question is, will you? *Neptune*, a hokey homage to everything from 50s B-grade sci-fi movies to *Alien*, is okay if you like staged goofiness such as model spaceships hanging from strings. Hey, but at least they're honest. The box reads: "Beyond its inherent shortcomings in quality, this entertaining story reveals what anyone can do with a dream and the help of a few good friends." *Shadows* is your basic vampire flick, with the same problems as *Neptune*: badly edited scenes (not everything has to be shown in real time), awful acting (try to minimize dialog when your actors can't act) and dinky music (hey look, we have a Casio!). It's interesting to note that you rarely see girls in any of these things. Of all

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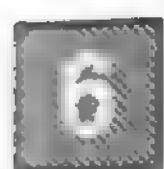
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the sleazy, quasi-porn sent to FTVG, why do I always get stuck with the crappy stuff?

—G.A.



THE PLAIN JANE CLUB

30min/Video

Mike Trippiedi Prods.

Jeez, and some people thought *Thelma & Louise* was a male basher! In this quirky little spoof of female buddy films, Ruth & Earl, Lucy & Bart, and Mary Anne & Jerry are all set for an interesting evening. Interesting because Earl, Burt and Jerry are all nothing more than ashes stored in matching white coffee cans stamped with their names. Talk about a weird triple date.

We find out in a flashback, that it all started when Mary Anne and Ruth convinced Lucy that Bart was cheating on her. Burt suffers an ill-timed heart attack just before Lucy blindly bolts in to snuff out his mistress. Mary Anne and Ruth arrive moments later, spot Burt's naked bod on the floor, think Lucy killed him and then they help Lucy kill the bimbo to keep her from calling the police. It's only then that Lucy realizes Burt was already dead when she attacked his mistress. She's killed when she didn't really need to. Thus, the Plain Jane Club was formed, as the women agreed to become each other's alibis.

If all this sounds like heavy-handed student film melodrama, fear not. *The Plain Jane Club* is actually a fairly amusing, tongue-in-cheek dark comedy that's competently acted, decently shot on video and

reasonably well-written and directed by Mike Trippiedi. At least we got a story here and I chuckled out loud a few times.

Good show.

—M.B.



FINGERED

80min/16mm
Ensemble Prods.

Director/cinematographer David Lemay Haycox's interestingly titled feature *Fingered* (Not the R. Kern/L. Lunch film) proves that he is capable of putting together a decent film.

The story involves a contract killer hired to kill his client's girlfriend and bring him her ringfinger as proof that the job has been done.



THE PLAIN JANE CLUB: Not your average student melodrama.

The inevitable "twist" occurs when he discovers that the hit is also his ex-girlfriend. The film doesn't pull many punches and there are enough plot turns to keep it mildly interesting. Thusly, *Fingered* isn't

terrible, but it could of been much better. The story conjures up images of blood and gore, violence is strictly implied—definitely PG-13 fare.

Though technically

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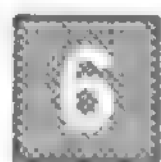
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NYU grad John Perez's **EXISTENTIAL GUNFIGHTER**.

superior, the directing is weak—sometimes sinking to the level of a bad porno. The most interesting thing about *Fingered* (aside from the title blunder) is the budget—\$25,000 on this? Gimme a break!

—D.B.J



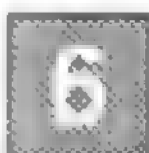
THE EXISTENTIAL GUNFIGHTER

18min/16mm/B&W
Pug Pictures

A heavy-drinking filmmaker is more interested in the actress of his "masterpiece" than his real life babe.

So goes *The Existential Gunfighter*, an obsessive tale of art and reality by NYU grad John Perez. The cinematography is not only superior, but a welcome relief to the eyes after watching hours of video drudgery. The brisk pace and excellent music enhance this non-dialog short. As for the film itself, it can best be described as "nice," which you can take anyway you like.

—G.A.



WORKING STIFFS

62min/Super 8
Sideshow Cinema

Working Stiffs gets a high rating for concept. The film's initial plot set up is also good for this sometimes clever social satire on the work ethic. A shiftless employment agency discovers the ulti-

mate secret to cheap labor: kill off potential temp-workers and bring them back as workaholic zombies—the perfect "Deadicated workers." Although it has its weaknesses, *Stiffs* held my attention enough to want to see it through without once hitting the fast forward button. Especially funny is the scene in which a woman proves that her co-worker is now zombified by repeatedly clobbering him with a hammer.

There's something about a woman pulling a hammer from her purse and nonchalantly hitting someone that just seems to get me.

Working Stiffs the stage play would be fantastic. Unfortunately, *Working Stiffs*, the movie, lacks the resources that doing something on film can provide. I can accept a voodoo ritual on stage as three people

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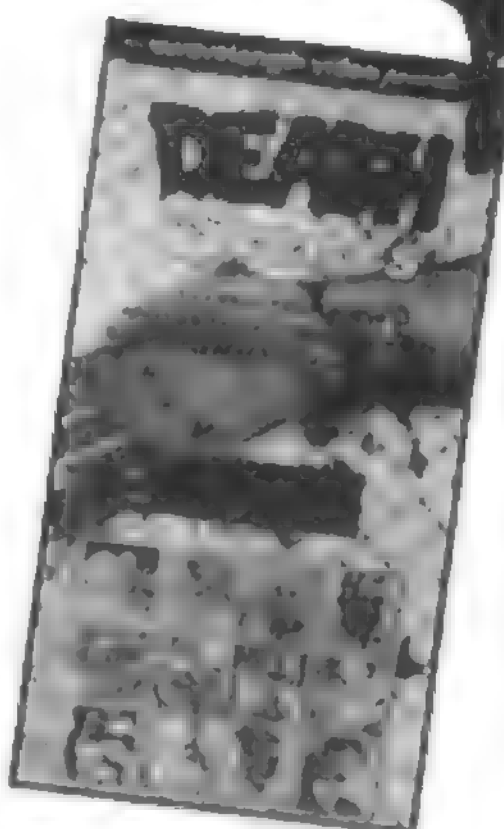
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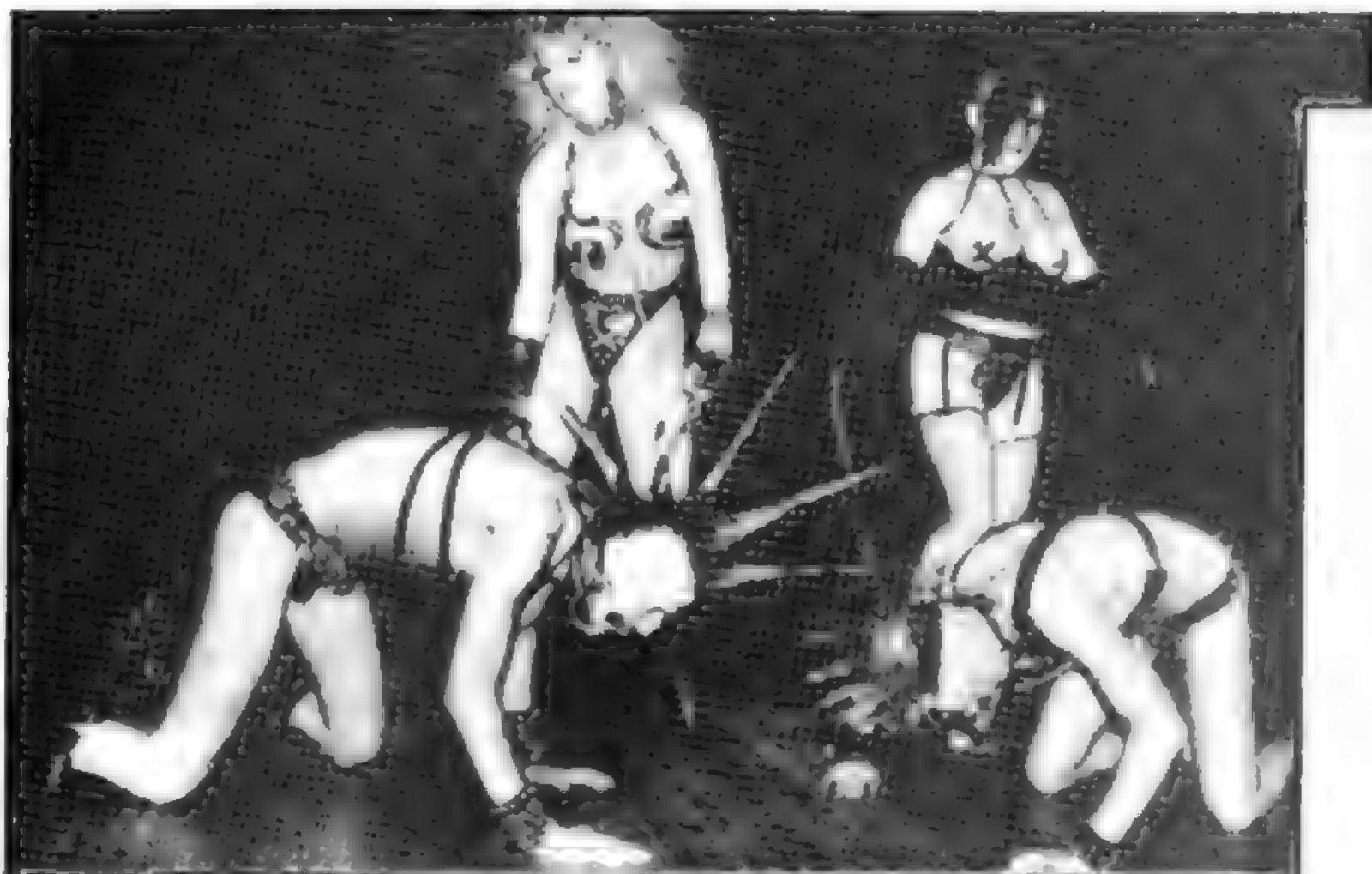
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SIN & SKIN: Noir Leather's ode to all that is erotic.

standing around chanting, or an exorcism set around a backyard barbecue. But to believe it on film I need some special effects, art direction and at least a couple of candles. And maybe some robes and a skull or two for good measure. I liked *Working Stiffs*, but the low production values cheated the script out of the opportunity to be a good film.

—P.V.

8 SIN & SKIN BONDAGE BALL

20min/Super 8
Noir Leather

Noir Leather is a small Royal Oak, Michigan enterprise involved in multiple activities which are devilishly interesting. They have before them all the fashion creations of fetish leather, as well as the accessories that one would hope to find, such as cockrings and sophisticated restraints. Featured on this tape are highlights of the fabulous fetish parties they organize, entirely fashioned in black and white with a dynamic and arty montage. Featuring punkers, warriors of the future, skinheads, slaves and hooded domina-

trices, which mix themselves into the spectacle (and the video) finally resolving towards the alternative rock aspect (and therefore alternative fashion) and domination. It is ten times better that a video-clip with transcendental music from Voice of Reason and Phillip D. There are violent images as well as violence in the aesthetics. In our opinion, this is one of the most beautiful fetish videos ever.

{After getting this tape at the last minute, we decided that the preceding review, reprinted from the french bondage mag Demonica, would be better than anything we could come up with. After all, they are experts in the field.—ED}

8 DEATH SCENES

80min/B&W/Video
Wavelength Video

Are you the kind who slows down to see the carnage on the highway? Well, now you can do the same in the emotionless privacy of your own home. Through unspecified (though certainly unusual) channels, Dr. Anton "Belzebub Loves You"



ROBINSON PHOTOGRAPHY

LeVey (figurehead of the one and only Satanic Church) somehow got his hooves on a wonderfully ghastly collection of AUTHENTIC vintage crime-scene photos and put them together in this nifty little tape. Yup, it's all here sans the tack-on magic of the cinema: auto accidents, suicide, murder, double murder, fratricide, matricide, patricide, kiddie-killing, and any other form of nastiness your sick little mind could crave. Actually, I was surprised by the number of ways you can splatter hair on a wall or blood on a floor (and how quickly I could get used to it). Now, thanks to *Death Scenes* creator Nick Bougas, I've been there, now I've seen it all. All in living black and white, served up with slick production values and a clammy narration by Dr. Creepy himself, *Death Scenes*

would make the perfect stocking stuffer for either the make-up FX guy who's run out of ways to kill people or the casual Freudian looking for the beast within us all. Isn't it great when something really sick falls into the wrong hands? —D.E.W.

{NOTE—This review originally appeared in FTVG #2, but the new availability of the title demanded a rerun. —ED}

CORRECTION:

Last issue, Darwin Bell was mistakenly credited as the director of the Super 8 comedy *Wake Up And Die!* Tito Jacques was the actual director of that film. We're sorry for this error and have dismissed contributor Rowdy Yates for this and other incidents of stupidity.

8

MONDO TEXAS15min/Film & Video
Jim Conrad Prods.

We all know Texas is weird (it isn't a coincidence that the large majority of serial killers come from either Texas or Wisconsin), but you really need to see some of that weirdness to believe it. That's what *Mondo Texas* offers: a quick trip around the Lone Star State, giving choice examples of why either all native Texans should be canonised or sterilised.

The best parts surround the Creation Science Museum in Glen Rose, where creationists try to prove that humans coexisted with dinosaurs through the use of faked fossil footprints and other dubious evidence, but there's something for the die-hard atheist (a guy who wanders I-

20 with a life-sized cross on his back), the city dweller (a concrete Stonehenge in the middle of the Las Colinas business complex with no discernable purpose or reason for being) and the non-Texan (an old man in Canton who demonstrates his Alzheimer's-induced impressions of American justice for the customers of a local flea market with the use of stocks and a fat boy armed with a mud-filled stocking). The only thing wrong with this video is that it's too damn short; give it another thirty minutes, and it'll make an excellent party tape, especially when you tell your parents you're moving to Dallas to participate in the filming of *Robocop IV*. Just get this tape, and be glad you live where you do.

-P.T.R.

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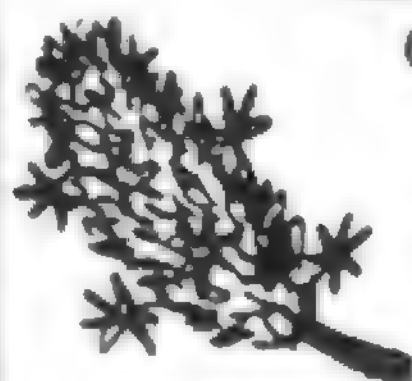
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'Girls From Girdleville'

By Rowdy Yates

IN THE OPENING OF GREG Theakston's authoritative tome *The Betty Page Annual*, Harlan Ellison recalled his boyhood adventures involving the cheese-cake antics for which Ms. Page is so famous. Like Ellison, I had my own exciting days as a youth—discovering that stash of mags in my father's forbidden drawer, for instance—but this was only fifteen years ago, as opposed to Ellison's fifty. Thusly, by the time I saw my first Page photo layout or catfight flick, I'd been unalterably infected by the virulent, post-'60s era strains of pornography.

However, there are, in addition to Ellison and Theakston, not only other keepers of the flame but those interested in stoking the proverbial fire for future generations. At the top of this short list would be New York-based photographer Eric Kroll.

A cult hero to the similarly minded, Kroll not only recreates the soft-focus images of his *Nugget* and *Gent* spiced youth via his own still camera, but through what he calls "photo-archaeology;" the painstaking rediscovery of lost negatives, prints and films from the '40s-'60s heydays of pin-up sleaze. The result of this devotion is not only one of the world's largest girly photo collections, but a treasure trove of vintage lingerie, leather and the requisite accessories.



A muscle-bound babe for the 90's.

And now, after Kroll's work has appeared in such diverse venues as *Vogue* and *Leg Show*, he's testing the waters of filmmaking with *Girls From Girdleville*, a fairly effective homage to the Irving Klaw tumble 'n tease classics.

Kroll offers his audience a peek into the past as bullet brassieres, waist

hugging corsets and flexing garters augment the natural curves his models supply in various stages of contorted undress.

Though this may sound like nirvana to some, *Girdleville* falls short of perfection. While Kroll may be most at home in his studio, the first segment, played out in front of a plain grey backdrop, reads flat. More like a string of fashion poses awkwardly captured with a static camera than the enactment of any fantasy I've ever had. But things soon improve as Kroll escapes the confinement of four walls and discovers the rest of the world. There, on isolated rooftops, in private backyards and at a secluded beach, he picks up the rhythm between the models and camera that becomes the connection between the girls and the viewer. They aren't just bouncing around in their underwear—they're doing it for you. The following scenarios, involving such antics as waltzing around New York wearing little but a smile and playing golf in high heels, are humorously tantalizingly—innocently captured in a mix of film and video.

With that, Kroll effectively transcends the mindless gynecological repetition of what passes for porn these days and transports the audience back to those simpler days . . . of rubber stockings, playful bondage and high-waisted panties. **[FTV]**



THE NEW YORK! UNDERGROUND



IT'S NOT DEAD, IT JUST SMELLS BAD

By Tessa Hughes-Freeland and David E. Williams

A CERTAIN ABREED OF post-punk ideology was rife in New York City in the 1980s. Synthesized with graffiti, rap, vestigial '70s disco and the still flailing entrails of '60s psychedelia, it gave way to a curious cultural climate.

There was a sense of community and an active subculture that pre-existed the supposed birth of the East Village. Illegal immigrants, pimps, prostitutes, drug dealers, addicts, poets, Satanists, writers, musicians, painters and performers all lived side by side in an area where anger and violence prevailed—creating a hotbed of co-existent crime and creativity. Nobody really had jobs or needed

Opposite: Laura Jessen in *WE ARE NOT TO BLAME*, the late Jack Smith in *BUBBLE PEOPLE* and Amy Turner in *SUBMIT TO ME*.



Tommy Turner nods out in Richard Kern's *SUBMIT TO ME*.

them—selling a few drugs, stripping for a couple of nights, turning a trick or driving a cab was enough to get by. Super 8 film was cheap and cameras easily available, which opened up the possibility for anybody to make films that had absolutely nothing to do with Hollywood—save for a type of genre exploitation or image plundering which served to make a personal statement. Next to having fun, an outler

R. Kern

for self expression was the most important thing for a whole slew of young people living in an urban jungle. For anybody working with film, the subject and content of what they did with it became an extension of a lifestyle. They blended the outrageousness of Andy Warhol's Factory environment with drug-driven punk nihilism and paved the way for experimentation of all kinds.

A relationship between filmmakers, musicians and performers developed mainly because they hung out together. The punk scene of 1977 and '78 was totally anti-art and anti-acceptance as bands like Suicide, DNA, Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, The Contortions, and Richard Hell and the Voidoids rocked the New York clubs. It was there, rather than in cinemas or alternative spaces, where the likes of Eric Mitchell (*Underground USA*), Amos Poe (*Unmade Beds*), James Nares (*Rome '78*), Beth and Scott B. (*Black Box*) and Vivienne Dick (*Beauty Becomes The Beast*) not only found their actors, but showed their films. They made Super 8 superstars out of the likes of Lydia Lunch, Jennifer Miro and Arto Lindsay—becoming the *Village Voice*-labeled "New Cinema" and laying the groundwork for what was to come.

MR. KERN GOES TO NEW YORK

Fueled by a plentiful supply of talent, time and a seemingly inexhaustible array of marginal characters ready and willing to do just about anything in the name of celluloid glamour, Richard Kern's life in the mid-80s was wild. A tall, lean and good looking guy with a ram-pantly vivid imagination, Kern hardly ever left his house, except on occasion to buy cheeseburgers. Nowadays, a complete vegetarian, he goes out to buy health food or travel to another country to tour his films, using his newly appropriated Ivy League look as a suitable disguise.

But then, the North Carolina native was into something few creatures understood: a barefaced parody of human extremes tangible to those possessed of a certain twist of mind or like inclination. Kern was exploring the raw meat of human nature. He made no bones about it, and his Bible-belt upbringing left him plenty to explore.

With his experience in photography and publishing fanzines with self-effacing titles like *Dumbfucker* and *Valium Addict*, Kern's sharp eye, menacing vision and incisive wit produced



• R. KERN •

REAL NAME: Richard Maurice Kern

BIRTHPLACE: Roanoke Rapids, NC

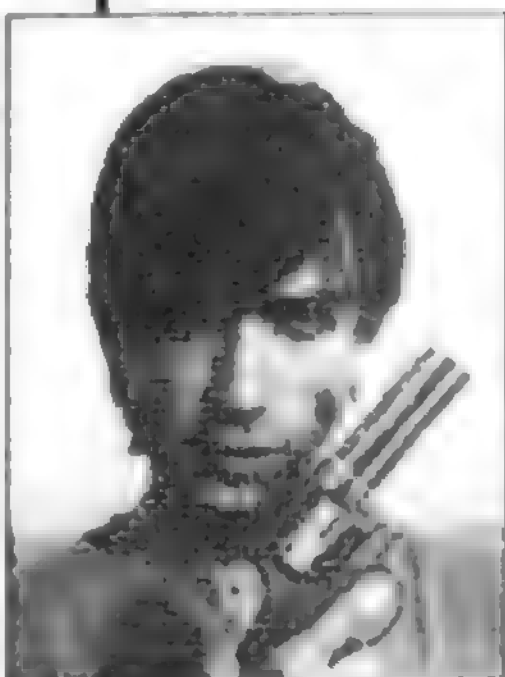
AGE: 38

BEST FILMS: *The Right Side Of My Brain*, *Fingered*, *The Evil Cameraman*

QUOTE: "My ultimate sex fantasy is the kind of girl I can have a normal sexual relationship with, talk to over coffee in the morning and not feel embarrassed to walk down the street with."

CURRENTLY: Doing carpentry to support his expensive film habit.

Tony Coke



films which not only let hell run loose, but also kept a finger on the pulse of a delinquent American psyche.

However unsettling, psychotic or distorted the content of Kern's films may be, his actors, or more often, actresses, never visually look bad. He

loves girls, and they love what he does for them. His technically proficient, inventive camerawork, imaginative lighting and fast paced editing contribute to the dynamic and compelling nature of his films. Working

exclusively in Super 8, Kern's narratives and characterizations are direct and concise.

In the early '80s he made *Goodbye 42nd Street* and *Zombie Hunger*, which both showed his interest in sex, drugs and violence. *Zombie Hunger* features a guy shooting up in a small room. He gets a rush, then suddenly jumps up and trashes the place. Kern also did a number of performances of "Blood Boy," an expanded cinema show that varied in content but usually involved partner Brian Moran naked, pouring blood over himself in Grand Guignol-style between acts of mock terrorism, interrogation and assassination. After one performance, an irate Italian tourist complained to the club about the blood stains on her expensive handbag, only to be told that she was lucky to have had such a good view.

An affiliation with punk music and attitude is an integral part of Kern's films. A story of sexual obsession, *Right Side of My Brain* (1984), was cowritten with Lydia Lunch and features Lunch, Henry Rollins, J.G. Thirlwell, Norman Westburg and others, with music by Foetus and Dream Syndicate. Dispensing with irrelevant subject matter, it focuses on one woman's pursuit of realizing dangerous sexual desires, a pastime close to the hearts of both Kern and Lunch.

Billed as "the sexual misadventures of a sexually insane girl," *Right Side* earned the reputation of being a sort of *Last Tango in the East Village* as Lunch's breathy narration revealed this about her fantasy lovers: "Once they realized I was willing to go further and further and get uglier and more disgusting no matter what their potential—no matter how far they would go, they would never go far enough."

Specializing in pairing down human relationships to their most basic elements, *Manhattan Love Suicides* (1985) ties together four short stories



Lydia Lunch and Sally Ven Yu get tight in *THE RIGHT SIDE OF MY BRAIN*. (1984)



R. Kern

of seedy lives ending in suicide by different means. In "Stray Dogs," David Wojnarowicz acts as a semi-retarded goon who pesters an older artist (Bill Rice) for affection. Finally, he mutilates himself in frustration, squirming on the floor in agony as the artist continues to paint. Adrienne Altenhaus

"Yeah, I get loads of it man. I take my lessons from Zedd. I have 'em falling at my feet . . . not really."

—RICHARD KERN ON WHETHER BEING A FILMMAKER HELPED HIM GET LAID.

stars as angry female driver in "Woman At The Wheel." Berated by boyfriends Gary Ray and Nick Zedd, and later confronted by a street gang, she becomes distracted by erotic visions and crashes headlong into a wall. In "Thrust In Me," Nick Zedd gives himself the blowjob of his life. "I Hate You Now" features Tommy and Amy Turner in a relationship of perverted fascination ending in self immolation.

Simultaneously horrific and hilariously, these stories have a cartoon-like quality in construction, as the characters interact in exaggerated behavior, appearance and expression. It is a

black-and-white film portraying a black-and-white world, complete with cheesy special effects.

The people Kern played and worked with were always close and his self-styled production company "Deathtrip" attracted people like a magnet. They were ready and willing to participate in and perform acts of erotic indulgence, humiliation, degradation, self-destruction and mutilation. *Submit To Me* (1985) and *Submit To Me Now* (1987) are, like a visual diary, a document of those who passed in front of Kern's camera. Kern himself describes the films as "documentaries of life in the East

WILL SHE OR WON'T SHE? Lydia Lunch cowrote and stars in Kern's *THE RIGHT SIDE OF MY BRAIN*, a horrific tale of one woman's sexual obsessions. Interestingly, it was this film that helped label Kern a misogynist.



Village, a collaboration with the people I made them about."

Devoid of backgrounds and storyline, the focus of *Submit To Me* is on individual acts; Lydia Lunch humps a cane, Audrey Rose and Casandra Stark dance together cheek to cheek, Pete Shore rips his throat out, Amy Turner wanders wet and bedraggled, Lung Leg plays with her salamander, Jim Thirlwell fondles himself, dances and rolls his eyes, Nick Zedd bounces off the walls in a straightjacket, and Tommy Turner is impaled by a blonde bitch with long wooden spears. These are the scenes that remain. A number of others were shot, but participants later changed



their minds about having these acts shown publically. These scenes are amongst the censored Kern films which, along with other atrocities, remain unseen by public eye.

In *Submit To Me* and *Submit To Me Now*, the cinematic emphasis is

on intrusive and authoritative camerawork, polychromatic lighting and kaleidoscopic editing—the result being an ocular assault of prurient *psychopornadelia*. The films are prefaced by an explanation that the characters portrayed were suggested to Kern by the actors themselves, either literally or subliminally.

These same actors collaborated on or starred in Kern's films with frequency. They were all people who hung out together, got fucked up, fucked each other or fucked each other up.

You Killed Me First (1985), was based on mixed autobiographical

PEOPLE LAUGHED AT FIRST

While ignored or ridiculed by many of the filmmakers it supposedly unified, this rally cry ultimately defined a movement.

THE CINEMA OF TRANSGRESSION MANIFESTO

We, who have violated the laws, commands and duties of the avant-garde; i.e., to bore, tranquilize and obfuscate through a fluke process dictated by practical convenience stand guilty as charged.

We openly renounce and reject the entrenched academic snobbery which erected a monument to laziness known as "structuralism" and proceeded to lock out those filmmakers who possessed the vision to see through this charade.

We refuse to take their easy approach to cinematic creativity; an approach which ruined the underground of the Sixties when the scourge of the film schools took over.

Legitimizing every mindless manifestation of sloppy moviemaking undertaken by a generation of misled film students emulating the failures of profoundly undeserving non-talents like Brakhage, Snow, Frampton, Gehr, Breer, etc.; the dreary media arts centers and geriatric cinema critics have totally ignored the exhilarating accomplishments of those in our rank—such underground "invisibles" as Zedd, Kern, Turner, Klemann, Delanda, Eros & Mare, and Direct Art Ltd.—a new generation of filmmakers daring to rip out of the stifling straightjackets of film theory in a direct attack on every value system known to man.

- We propose that all film schools be blown up and all boring films never be made again.

- We propose that a sense of humor is an essential ele-

ment discarded by the doddering academics and further, that any film which doesn't shock isn't worth looking at.

- All values must be challenged. Nothing is sacred. Everything must be questioned and reassessed in order to free our minds from the faith of tradition.

- Intellectual growth demands that risks be taken and changes occur in political, sexual and aesthetic alignments no matter who disapproves.

- We propose to go beyond all limits set or prescribed by taste, morality or any other traditional value system shackling the minds of men.

- We pass beyond and go over the boundaries of millimeters, screens and projectors to the state of expanded cinema.

- We violate the command and law that we bore audiences to death in rituals of circumlocution and propose to break all the taboos of our age by sinning as much as possible.

- There will be blood, shame, pain and ecstasy, the likes of which no one has yet imagined. None shall emerge unscathed.

- Since there is no afterlife, the only hell is the hell of praying, obeying laws and debasing yourself before authority figures. The only heaven is the heaven of fun, fucking, learning new things and breaking as many rules as you can.

- This act of courage is known as transgression.

- We propose transformation through transgression—to convert, transfigure and transmute into a higher plane of existence in order to approach freedom in a world full of unknowing slaves.

—Orion Jeriko (aka Nick Zedd) in *Underground Film Bulletin* #4. 1985

Sex and violence: Kern's fantasies permeated his films. Natz in *SUBMIT TO ME NOW* (1987).



Foetus (J.G. Thirlwell) provided the music.

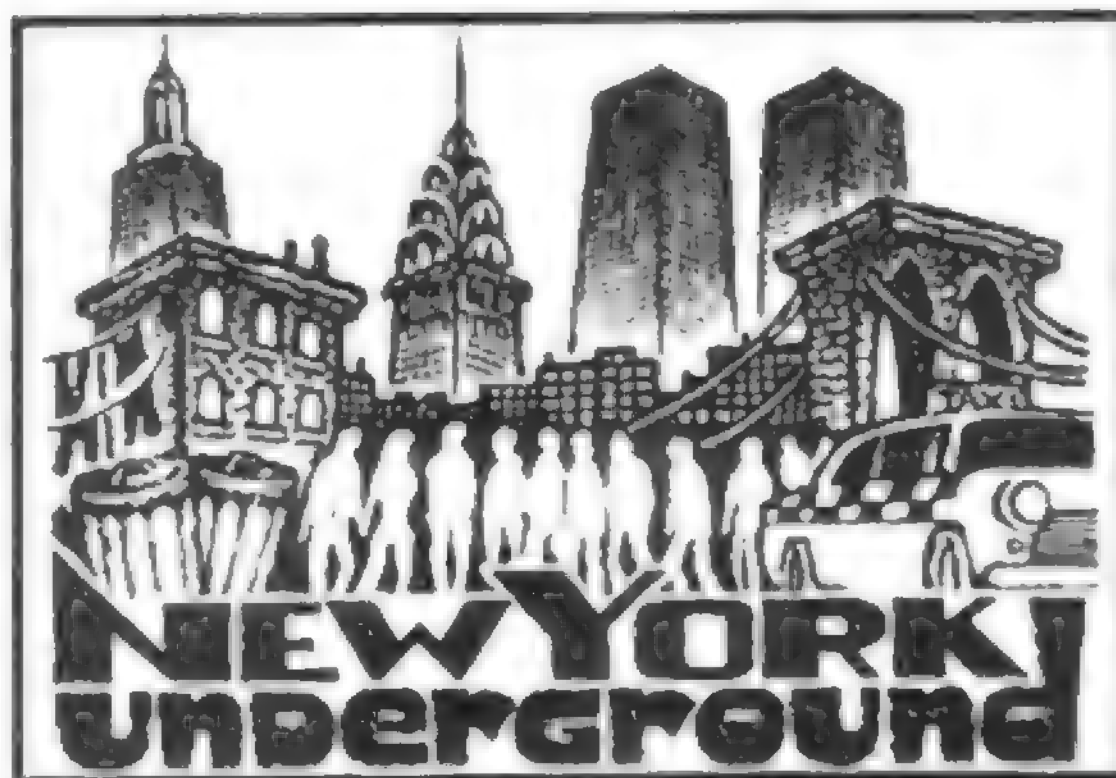


Kern And Nations on the set of *FINGERED*. (1986)

experiences of a number of Kern's friends. A nightmare of domestic suburbia, it was initially shown as part of a collaborative installation with David Wojnarowicz, who also acts as the father in the film. The display featured a massacred skeletal family lounged around a table while the television revealed the events leading up to the bloody aftermath.

You Killed Me First acutely manifests the alienation of a teen spirit as a young girl's (Lung Leg) vehemence towards her parent's (Wojnarowicz and Karen Finley) platitudes and her sister's self-righteousness drives her to shooting them at the dinner table.

Lydia Lunch and Richard Kern joined forces again in 1986 to make *Fingered*. Starring Lunch, Marty Nations, Lung Leg and Emilio Cubiero, *Fingered* dives in at the



deep end, hard and fast, and never comes up for air. Lunch stars as the unquenchable phone sex girl, forever thirsty for sexual adventure, provided it isn't with some dick who wants her to be his mother. She gets it on with a grungy macho gearhead (Nations) who, after offhandedly slitting someone's throat, drives her to the Snakepit, a kind of Spahn Ranch for grungy macho dudes only. After a highly charged sex scene with guns offloaded, they pick up a distressed young girl (Lung Leg) who the gearhead proceeds to attack with the aid of Ms. Lunch.

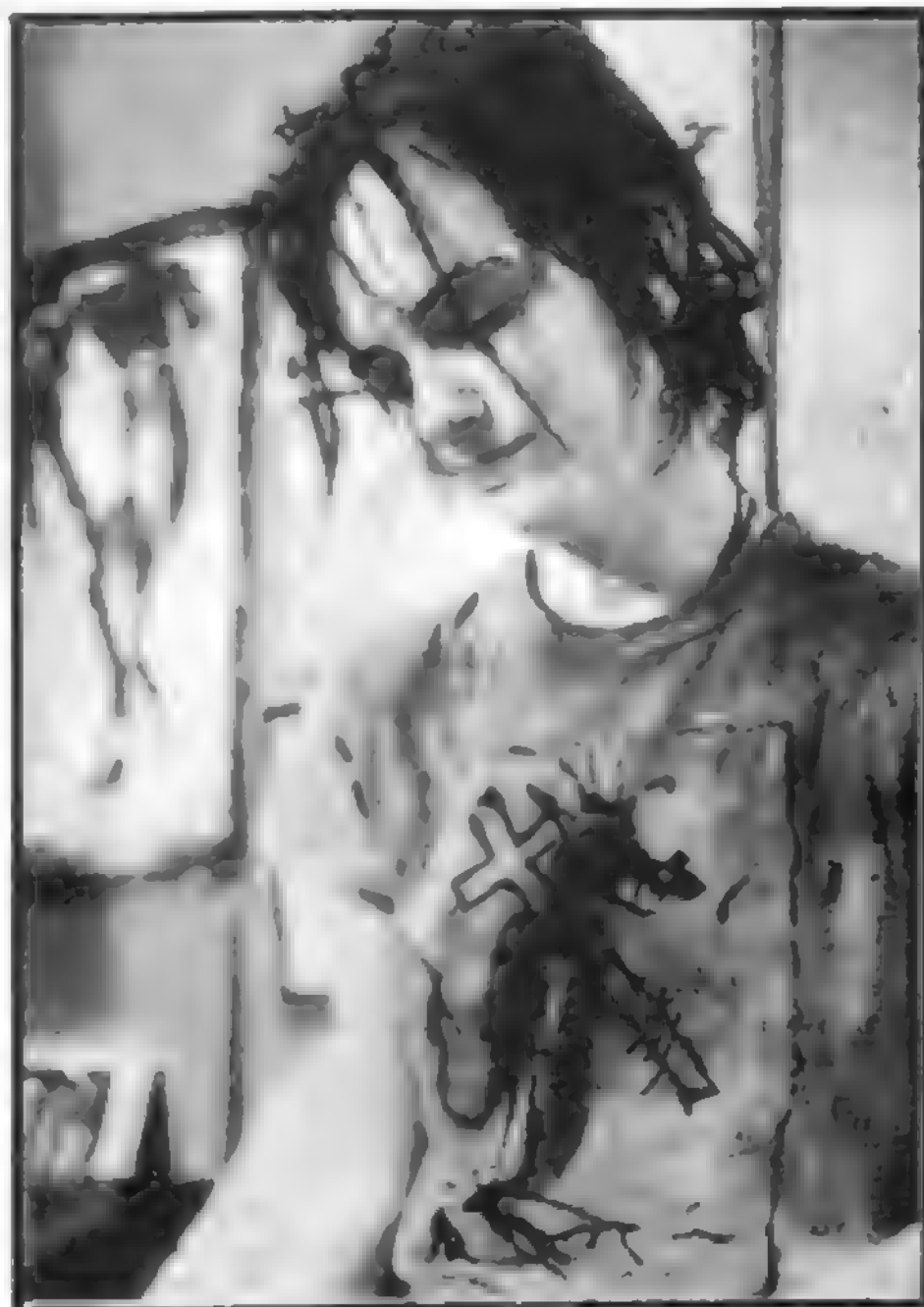
During the shooting of *Fingered*, Leg was kept away from the set and the other actors until it was time to film her scenes. She described in one interview that she was "nearly locked away in a virtual prison cell, having a wonderful time eating gobs of LSD."

The first time she met Marty was just before shooting the final rape scene, which Lunch helped her prepare for by asking that Lung imagine how she herself felt—as a former real-life sexual victim of Marty Nations.

Nations refers to his past relationship with Lunch as a "dress rehearsal" for the film.

The Evil Cameraman

(1986-90) picks up where *Submit To Me Now* left off. Starring Kern himself, it involves an "underground" filmmaker subverting his actresses. A few years in absentia, there is a marked contrast between two phases as Kern's encounters with girls in the second half of the film become acts of persuasion rather than brutality. A few years ago, Kern tried to screen *The Evil Cameraman* at The Ritz. After the first 30 seconds of an extremely skin-



Lung Leg embodies alienated youth in *YOU KILLED ME FIRST*.

ny Jap Ann being tied to a ladder and her head wrapped in black cloth, the image disappeared from the screen and Kern was thrown out of the club followed with the owner's opinion that it was "kiddie porn."

Many critics and fans alike have focused on the blood and guts violence in Kern's films, rather than on the humor. But lately, the humor has come to the fore. In *X=Y* (1990), Kern addresses the question of violence on a societal level rather than in terms of personal obsessive self destruction. Ironically, Kern himself is fascinated by girls with guns. At the end, Tomoya, a Japanese girl, offers a gun on a folded American flag



While many thought these films were expressions of sexual fantasies, for the actors, at least, they were the real thing. Annabelle Davies, Linda Serbu and Charles Pinion on the set of Kern's latest, *THE BITCHES*.



Linda Serbu in Kern's Tumale (1991)

to the viewer. In *Catholic* and *Nazi* (1991) both a Catholic schoolgirl and a Nazi officer are revealed as strippers as Kern cracks through exterior preconceptions and makes fun of stereotypical labels.

Sex and fetishism prevail as Kern continues to explore generally considered taboo subjects. Nudity is pretty taboo in the 9 to 5 world, throwing the MPAA into NC-17 fits, but Kern celebrates the beauty of human sexuality in action. In *Tumble* (1991), the athletic eroticism of Linda Serbu's movement is doubled by his classic disorienting camerawork. He uses his camera like a subversive weapon penetrating exterior appearances and opens our eyes to the world of a fantastical reality. *Scooter and Jinx* (aka *Moneylove*) (1991) portrays a paid lesbian encounter. Money also appears in a transaction between filmmaker and actress in *The Evil Cameraman*. Perhaps this is a reflection of Kern's concern for the source of funding for his films.

One label which has been wrongly attributed to Kern himself is that of misogynist. Richard Kern is not a misogynist; he does *not* hate women.



• NICK ZEDD •

REAL NAME: James Harding
(aka Orion Jeriko, Nick Zodiac, Nicola Zedd)

BIRTHPLACE: Silver Spring, MD

AGE: 35+

BEST FILMS: *Police State*, *The Wild World Of Lydia Lunch*

QUOTE: "I know I won't be remembered, but you won't either."

QUIRK: Attracted to women with big butts.

CURRENTLY: Driving a cab, posing in gay porn mags and leaching off yet another gullible rich chick.



CM Library

Not one person in any of his films has done something that they haven't wanted to do anyway. Ironically, it was probably the films that he and

Lydia have collaborated on that earned him this reputation. Curiously, in his most recent film, *The Bitches*, a kind of pornographic parody, the girls (Annabelle Davies and Linda Serbu) are on top and in control. So does this make men victims? One might ask their male costar, Charles Pinion.

Incredibly prolific, Kern is currently working on his 18th film. Again working with Lunch, the working title is *I Hate Fucking Movies*. Set in New Orleans, the story concerns a black cop who, while on the trail of a pornographer, meets Lydia, resulting in a bizarre sex triangle between she, her brother and his wife.

ZEDD EVOLUTION MADE EASY

Growing up in Maryland, James Harding was tortured by his schoolyard peers, his physical characteristics soon earning him the name "nigger lips." In early 1968, James was making Super 8 sci-fi monster movies with G.I. Joe dolls. A giant fly threatened earthlings with doom in *The Attack of the Giant Fly* and *Return of the Giant Fly*, but it wasn't until 1977 that he decided that filmmaking was more than a hobby—but an effective propaganda tool. In 1979, under the name Nick Zodiac, he was showing his Super 8 punk feature, *They Eat Scum*, in the clubs downtown. A simple yet critically maligned tale of East Village death rocker cannibals, its condemnation by the *Wall Street Journal* gave the film an official stamp of disapproval. By 1980, he had completed a probing pseudo-propaganda 16mm short called *The Bogus Man*, which he described as "an attempt to convince people to assassinate the president." His identity had fully



Zedd tangles with the Man (Willoughby Sharp) in *POLICE STATE*.

transformed into Nick Zedd.

Politically concerned from the start, an anarchic, inquiring character was at work. Acutely aware of the fragile nature of parody, *The Bogus Man*, and later his horror spoof *Geek Maggot Bingo* (1983), contain a pervading element of absurdity which pokes fun at the genre type that they allude to, while simultaneously exploiting it. Well versed in schlock, horror, B-movies, comic book culture and camp, the initial popiness of Zedd's imagery gives way to a kind of awkward decadence.

A shift occurred when Zedd travelled to Europe in a failed attempt to re-seduce estranged love-interest Lydia Lunch. The result was *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* (1983), a very personal and

Atomique Films



Zedd (center) would later star in Alyce (at right) Wittenstien's sci-fi spoof *NO SUCH THING AS GRAVITY*—as a lawyer!

emotionally expressive Super 8 portrait constructed from a "fuck you" tape Lunch had sent Zedd and some "home movie" footage he shot of her morbidly wandering about Ireland. Zedd claims to have made a quick \$1,000 by screening it at a club—revenge against her for dumping him after just three months.

Lunch countered by declaring the film was, "a piece of shit . . . just filming me walking around. It wasn't even meant to be a film."

In 1984, frustrated by the local press and lack of acceptance from the alternative film spaces in the area, Zedd published the first issue of *The Underground Film Bulletin*. His realization was that, to make a point, or to attract attention to himself and other filmmakers, the energy had to come from within the community. Through the characters of Orion Jeriko, Rufus Jacoby, Ernie Birk and sometimes Nicola Zedd, he substantiated and perpetuat-

TOTEM OF THE EGO

In his pseudo-autobiography, Bleed, Nick Zedd relates the making of Ela Troyano's Totem Of The Depraved.

A Cuban girl named Ela asked me if I'd make a film with her in which I seduce people on camera, reenacting my method of surviving on the streets. We went out looking for girls to be in the film. In front of Stromboli's on First Avenue a fat girl asked me "Are you from England?" I said "No," and started talking to her. She had a beautiful face and bright red hair. Gia lived on Bleecker Street her whole life—sixteen years. Her parents, who had long since broken up, treated her like shit when they weren't just ignoring her. She'd been living with her grandmother who had just died. I asked her if she'd want to be in a movie and she said, "Yes." The next day I was set to do two scenes; one with Gia and one with Phoebe Legere, a skinny performance artist who for years had been claiming she'd "be on Johnny Carson next week," after her, "Playboy spread came out."

Without the luxury of a script, I did the scene with Gia in which I examined her jewelry and then handcuffed her and proceeded to undress her until she whispered to me that she was a virgin. I asked her if I could move in with her and she said, "Yes," so I told Ela to turn off the camera and leave. Phoebe was pissed since she'd planned to let me move in with her but hadn't yet told me.

The next day, improvising a scene with Phoebe during the

filming of *Totem Of The Depraved*, I began to understand Ela's directorial approach. She'd turn on the camera and sit back and let us do all the work. She never gave any direction and we never knew what was going on. I had to

Ela Troyano



Zedd & Gia get it on in TOTEM.

figure it all out as the camera was rolling. In a daze, Ela dropped the camera and broke a lens. I guess she forgot she was filming. When she got the film back from the lab, instead of editing it, she just threw it on a projector and pronounced it finished.

Gia and I got along alright except that whenever I stuck my dick inside her she'd start screaming hysterically. Sex was out, but I didn't care since she was letting me stay at her place for free.


Self-published via the most rudimentary xerox means, Bleed does offer a unique look at life on the Village scene edge. But while Zedd's interesting word play keeps things from becoming totally uninteresting, his lack of decipherable organization creates an experience similar to that of watching one of his films. However, if you want to know how to keep off the streets by sponging off others, this is the book for you.

—David E. Williams

ed his concept of a "Cinema of Transgression." This was an artful means of packaging a "movement" of which he became the self-appointed spokesman by dint/force of writing about it. In "The Cinema of Transgression Manifesto," Zedd declared: "There will be blood, shame, pain and ecstasy, the likes of which no one has yet imagined; none shall emerge unscathed." Ironically, the self-consciousness of this "movement" eluded many who were embraced by Zedd as a part of it. Many just laughed it off, or were so deeply entrenched in transgressive lifestyles that, like lunacy, it wasn't really possible to recognize it as such.

The Underground Film Bulletin was ultimately a massive exercise in self-promotion. Following the example of his Dada and Surrealist forbearers, Zedd had created a vehicle to establish something which, for want of a better description, became considered a movement. An upcoming book entitled *The Cinema of Transgression* by Jerri Rossi and Duane Davis, to be published this year by Primal Publishing, is testament to the historical approval such words and actions achieve over time.

Connecting with other filmmakers, Zedd pursued sexual experimentation as Nicola Zedd in a variety of expanded cinema performances. As Nicola,



• CASANDRA STARK •

REAL NAME: Roseanne Melo
 BIRTHPLACE: Connecticut
 AGE: ?
 BEST FILMS: *We Are Not To Blame*, *Death Of An Arabian Woman*
 CHILDHOOD: Nervous disorder caused bouts of uncontrollable vomiting.
 DAY JOBS: Go-go dancer, babysitter, waitress.
 BY FAR HER BIGGEST REGRET: Dating Nick Zedd.
 CURRENTLY: Struggling to be taken seriously.

Blue Star Pictures



he also collaborated with Richard Kern for "Thrust in Me," a segment from *The Manhattan Love Suicides*. Through clever cutting and simple camera tricks, Nicola kills herself, Nick gets a postmortem blow job and then jerks off over her corpse. By similar means, Nick and Nicola also both appear in Kern's *King of Sex*.

Interestingly, Zedd's ulterior motive for this cooperation was to turn the politics of filmmaking into a method of seducing others into letting him use their equipment.

Seeing Kern's *You Killed Me First* reminded Zedd that narrative films

need not be feature length and that any length was possible—provided the material was good. Returning to scripted narrative, he made *Police State* in 1987. Based on personal experience, the film trails a self-styled rebel and his torture by the hands of the NYPD during a drug sweep program called Operation Pressure Point. Opening with a brilliant shot of the title being spray painted on the back of a police car and partially shot with five rolls of out-of-date film found in an abandoned building, *Police State* is perhaps the most oppressive of Zedd's films—ending with his character's brutal castration.

His more recent work, *Whoregasm* (1988), and *War is Menstrual Enty* parts 1 & 2 (still uncompleted), are non-narrative and unscripted. According to Zedd, his choices are no longer dictated by reason but by some unseen force. He claims *War is Menstrual Enty* was made as a product of anticipating war and a wish to remind us that war is about bloodshed and is not glamorous, artificial or symbolic.

CASANDRA STARK ARRIVES

Cassandra Stark is a filmmaker whose work is fraught with religious and ritualistic overtones. Her films are poetic and disturbing in their expression of human behavior.

Appearing on the scene as Rosanne Melo, she soon found herself under the seductive spell of the seemingly "romantic" Nick Zedd. Under his watchful eye, she made (or appeared in) a series of short Super 8 films, with



"Continuity to us is when the film runs through the projector."

—THE UNDERGROUND FILM BULLETIN

titles such as *Dead On My Arm* (1985) and *Go To Hell* (1986), finishing the more sophisticated *Wrecked On Cannibal Island* in 1987. More sophisticated (at least in use of sound), the film portrays several relationships and the obsession, loneliness, fear and fascination that they contain—humorously illustrated in one scene by a faux tattoo engraved between Stark's legs reading "Abandon All Hope Ye Who Enter Here."

In *We Are Not To Blame* (1990), the apparent strangeness of two sisters (Stark and Laura Jessen) becomes easily understood as they wreak appropriate revenge on one of their abusive husbands (Richard Kern), by tying him up and imprisoning him on their rooftop. Stark's films contain an intense personal vision also present in her paintings, writing and music. The aghast faces in *We Are Not To Blame* are reflected in the paintings by Casandra, which are included in the film. In her most recent film, *Death of an Arabian Woman* (1991), Casandra plays the title role in a personal interpretation of the anticipated perils of war from a female point of view.

THEY THOUGHT SHE WAS DEAD

Ela Troyano puts a truly flexible approach toward moving pictures into prac-



Stark gets a beating from Natz in *WRECKED ON CANNIBAL ISLAND*.



(Above) Stark and costars with David Oimet (Below) in her most recent film, *DEATH OF AN ARABIAN WOMAN*



Photos: Blue Star Pictures

tice. A campy, celebratory outrageousness characterizes her expanded cinema performances. Showing at downtown clubs, as well as alternative art spaces, she incorporates film, slides, video, and live action into these performances, during which projectors are used like instruments—resulting in a visual jam analogous to music.

These performances, or multiple projections, were contextually varied depending on whatever technical resources available, and were mostly collaborative.

Troyano did a whole series of nights at Pyramid in 1982 with David Schmidlapp. One of the larger of these performances was a four night multiple projection covering three 20 foot walls. These ambient visuals were in constant motion for 6 to 8 hours each night. This was a collaboration between Troyano, Tessa Hughes-Freeland, Andy Soma and Stephen Holman at the Kitchen for *8 B.C. Nights* (1986).

Implementing a barrage of up to 16 projectors, these projections were spontaneous and aleatory. They were often long and varied in degrees of intense lyrical grooviness, interspersed with flashes, vibrating rhythms, cuts and bursts, refractions and fusions. They involved just about anything that was projectable including feathers, creepy plastic insects, gels, mirrors and broken glass.

In 1983, Troyano made *The Bubble People*, a double projection of two unedit-

ed reels with two respective soundtracks. This was made by capturing an event or "happening." A variety of sets were put in a room, actors and crew came together and just shot whatever transpired. The camera was centrally positioned to allow maximum range of activity between the continuous sets. The actors were chosen and informed of an idea. Phoebe Legere acts the Bubble Goddess, a Marilyn Monroe-like character who comes to earth and teaches everybody to be like her. The late Jack Smith played the same role on a different day. In fact, anybody who came to the set could potentially appear.

For *Totem of the Depraved* (1984), a film in four sections, featuring Nick Zedd, Phoebe Legere, Gia Gamba and James Richardson, Troyano had a definite idea of different cinematic approaches for each section. Based on (and parodizing Andy Warhol's *My Hustler*) Nick Zedd has sexual encounters with all the characters. Gia was found on the day of the shoot, and James Richardson was just asked to show up. This spontaneity was intentional and a small scripted segment added later was an idea Nick wanted to try. (See sidebar on p. 45)

Interestingly, Zedd's dissatisfactory experience on *Totem* led to his spreading the rumor that Troyano was dead. Word of her "passing" quickly went through the community, with even close friends believing the news. The action of proclaiming his enemies "dead" soon became a standard tactic of the propaganda master—one which Zedd found annoyingly effective when FILM THREAT later ran a prank obituary about him some years later. (See interview on p. 63)

Troyano's most recent film, *Once Upon a Time in the Bronx*



REAL NAME: Lisa —

BIRTHPLACE: Minneapolis, MN

AGE: ?

BEST FILMS: *Black Monster*,
You Killed Me First,
Fingered

QUOTE: "I wasn't there during the sex scenes. I was locked away having a wonderful time eating acid."—on costarring in Kern's *Fingered*

CURRENTLY: Residing in San Francisco, making a film about dead mice.



(Below) You won't believe where Lung Leg hides her switchblade in Kern's *SUBMIT TO ME*.



(1992), was inspired by a visit to a gallery where she was attracted to an exhibit of dolls dressed as rappers and homeboys made by Ricky Rodriguez. What started out as an idea for video generated interest and developed into a larger 16mm project. It is an upbeat story of two young Puerto Ricans dealing with problems common to Latino kids growing up in the U.S.—lack of opportunities, teenage pregnancy and few role models. The film features rap songs by Latin Empire, who also act the two main characters and are musically and visually integrated into the storyline. Presently she is also working on a film about the life of Carmelita Tropicana.

THE HORROR OF PFAHLER

Breaking down the barriers between film, performance and music, Kembra Pfahler has found a new name for her work, which incorporates all of the above. This name is 'Avilabism,' which basically means working with anything available. Surfboard baby Pfahler was performing at all the small downtown clubs in the early '80s.

Working with her longtime partner Samoa, their performances involved mysterious rituals and psychosexual symbols dazzled with glamour and glitter, like a Las Vegas showgirl run wild and rampant. So when a camera fell into their hands, film became another medium to explore.

Pfahler's Super 8 films are colorful, elegant, hallucinatory, melancholy and fun. *Cornella, Story of a Burning Bush* (1985), is the most simple. Combining primitivism with modern consumerism, Kembra somehow reconciles two apparent opposites in the awareness of a sense of universal tribalism, where the fetishes and rituals of



Self-proclaimed goddess Kembra Pfahler appears in Jeri Cain Rose film ANIMA SOLA.



humanity collide physically and ideologically in an Availablist consciousness.

Bodily adornments and bizarre physical feats represent duress and disorder in *Mild Seven*, *The Cowboy Stories* (1986), in which Kembra raises herself up off the ground, her feet attached to bowling balls, aided only by the support of two long poles in her hands. In a 1987 performance entitled *Pussycat Bladder Waste*, she performed a bloodletting ceremony, only recently replacing blood bags for the real thing. The film *Historical Beauty Treatments* (1986), depicts the

natural sources and visceral procedures involved in beautification throughout the ages.

Pfahler's idiosyncratic alter ego Abra Kedavour, inspired by Ed Wood's *Orgy of the Dead*, is just one example of her versatile persona as a minor cultural icon. She also appears as different personalities in a variety of films: Jerri Rossi's *Anima Sola*, Ari Roussimoff's *Shadows in the City*, and Zedd's *War is Menstrual Envy* just to name a few. Most recently, Pfahler has collaborated with Richard Kern in a film about body piercing, in which she has her vagina sewn shut—albeit temporarily.

THE DEVIL MADE THEM DO IT

Where Evil Dwells, cowritten and codirected by Tommy Turner and David Wojnarowicz, is a heavy metal drama capturing the suburban Satan teen spirit. Based on the life of Ricki



(Above) Tommy Turner with a flag painting by David Wojnarowicz. (Right) Animal torture in *RAT TRAP*, a film by Turner and Tessa Hughes-Freeland.

Kasso, an 18-year-old murderer and spiritual leader of many Satanic teens in Northport, IL, *Where Evil Dwells* promised to be a feature length, action-packed Super 8 epic. In 1986, Tommy Turner described the film as being based on actual events leading to the murder of Gary Lawers and Kasso's suicide, experiences he and Wojnarowicz went through as teens and some they wish they had gone through: Black Sabbath, AC/DC, Angel Dust, vandalism, the occult, animal and human torture.

The film involved many people in its making and one scene, set in Hell, was a pure community event. Flyers were posted and circulated requesting 150 people to play the inhabitants of Hell. Shot in an abandoned warehouse in Williamsburg, there was all kinds of mayhem, pyrotechnics, and extreme physical atrocities. The

explosives experts from Survival Research Laboratories made the bombs, and Mark Gabarino did the special effects. Scott Werner starred as Ricki, Baby Gregor as Gary Lawers, artist Joe Coleman as the Devil, and Rockets Redglare, of course, was Jesus. Music plays an important part in the film and *Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel* (J.G. Thirlwell) wrote the title track.

According to Tommy, he and David made the film since "most of the kids involved in this lifestyle are too out of their minds to get a camera and shoot it themselves."

As a story addressing teen suicide, among other things, this film logically followed Turner's *Simonland* (1984), which was based on cults and mass suicide like Jim Jones'



T. Hughes-Freeland

Jonestown, Guyana. Unfortunately, *Where Evil Dwells* was never completed as a feature, but does exist as a half-hour trailer. The rest of the footage reached an ill-fated destiny in an inferno on 13th Street several months ago.

As with any large indie project, the shooting of *Where Evil Dwells* took a long time. During this time, Tommy Turner and Tessa Hughes-Freeland made *Rat Trap* (1986), a twisted drug movie containing images of animal torture and human self-destruction. Its intended purpose as an anti-drug movie was pretty ironic. Turner has not made any films recently, but

has been doing some performances and was seen recently on a Boston-bound train equipped with a bucket of fresh hearts and livers.

David Wojnarowicz's Super 8 *Fire in My Belly* (1987), combines footage shot in Mexico with images from his own personal iconographic vocabulary. Wojnarowicz is an artist whose work in all disciplines: painting, writing, photography and film is highly individual, accessible, angry, compassionate and beautiful in its excellence. Parts of *Fire in My Belly* have since been reused in multi-media installations. Wojnarowicz has also made other films and videotapes with Phil Zwickler and others.

ADDING SOME EROS

Experimenting with the visceral and technical elements of film, an alchemy combined with the erotic and mythic is at the core of Bradley Eros films and expanded cinema performances. Using disparate elements of still images, found footage, video samples and self shot film, the poetic nature of his work is substantiated by equally haunting soundtracks. A previous collaborative relationship, dubbed Erotic Psyche, consisted of Eros and Aline Mare. Mare currently lives in San Francisco, and her most recent piece is a video *S'Aline's Solution*. Now Eros collaborates with Jeanne Liotta. Their films and performances are dark, mysterious, biomorphic, psychedelic and subterranean. Utilizing optical printing and rephotography, most of the films are Super 8 though *Fungus Eroticus* (1990), was printed onto 16mm. Eros and Liotta describe themselves as "media mystics investigating cycles of decay and regeneration in the body and the world." The freedom of working with varied multimedia elements means that every performance is different in some way. Their films are incorporated into their performances which are named in the same spirit: *Liquid Hardcore Mystics*, *Wandscape*,



From the film *FUNGUS EROTICUS* (1990) by Bradley Eros and Jeanne Liotta.

Techno Spiritus and *Turning the Dragon Inside Out*, to name a few. Essentially experimental, environmental and ephemeral, the way in which they work is contextually different on every occasion yet a sensory essence is always present. This conception of images as infinitely versatile and mutable challenges the notion of film as an object that is transportable and compact. The arena in which Eros and Liotta work is one of breadth, dealing with correspondences and associations that are mystical and sensual and whose transmission is primarily psychic.

THE ONSLAUGHT OF VIDEO

The upsurge of video availability during the '80s opened up different possibilities for filmmakers just as Super 8 did in the late '70s. At this point, the incorporation of video or TV images in films is pretty much taken for granted and video distribution for films is a truly successful way to reach a wide audience. With the

growing quality and availability of video projectors, the boundaries between film and video are breaking down in many areas.

Video has a life of its own which does not really become obvious until one actually works with it. Filmmakers who have worked with both mediums like Charlie Ahearn and Beth B. both emphasize this.

Ahearn's two recent videos *Doing Time in Times Square* and *Jane in Peepland*, may seem like a far cry from *The Deadly Art of Survival* (1978), but behind the camera, the same mind is at work. Beth B.'s videos *Belladonna* (1989), *Thanatopsis* (1991) and *Stigmata* (1991) have socio-political affinities and some structural similarities with her previous Super 8 films. Now being much more developed and successful, both Beth B. and Charlie Ahearn have directed 35mm features, and may again, but continue to work on a personal uncommercial level.

It is commonplace for filmmakers to use video to edit and distribute films, and some have chosen to work

completely in this medium.

Charles Pinion, who made the skatepunk video feature *Twisted Issues*, and Annabelle Davies are presently shooting another Hi-8 horror video entitled *Red Spirit Lake*.

Davies and Tessa Hughes-Freeland are also currently in post-production on *Dirty* (1992), which is loosely based on a Baraille story and deals with aspects of obsession and degradation.

However, others, such as Nick Zedd, decry the very look of video, describing it as "looking so real that it makes everything look mundane," and opt instead to work with film.

Unfortunately, due to old prejudices, many film festivals are still leery of, and do not accept Super 8 and, short of blowing up to 16mm, video may provide an alternative means of presentation.

The intimate and matter of fact manner of Carl Michael George's *DHPG Mon Amour* (1989) locates the extraordinary conditions of living with AIDS in the late 80s. The short Super 8 documentary follows domestic preparations for a barbecue and an elaborate drug ritual necessary for the self-administration of DHPG, a treatment for the AIDS related illness CMV Retinitis. The emotional power of this film is extraordinary. The viewer is completely involved with such a degree of intimacy that it is both moving and disturbing. This film could never have been made in 16mm. However, for screening at the



Holly Adams starred with Steve O in Alyce Wittenstien's *BETAVILLE*, a witty homage to the Godard classic.

New Director's series, it had to be blown up to 16mm. Similarly, Richard Kern's *Fingered*, had to be enlarged for inclusion in the Berlin Film Festival in 1987.

Typically short of funds, Kern made the blow-up from video by pointing his camera at a television screen and rephotographing the entire film in 16mm. Crude yet effective—but best of all, cheap.

DISINTEGRATION OF THE SCENE

Within a creative community, people worked in interchangeable roles.

In making these films, people acted in each other's projects, exchanged ideas, and helped with the technical aspects. It was up to those who cared to make it work by providing showcases for film and also writing about it. But, communities do change, people leave and others arrive, and there is no reason for this one to have been any different.

Atomique Films

The steady gentrification of the area, which changed Loisaida, or the Lower East Side, into the East Village, put economic pressure on the whole community. Stricter law, license and code enforcement forced many of the small clubs to close. Rising rents made it imperative to have some form of reliable income, and AIDS awareness grew as more and more artists and performers died. Leading a life of hanging out, doing drugs and making a few bucks from a show became less viable, insufficient or nearly impossible.

Under the pressures of environmental and personal change, some active members of the film community left town. Lung Leg, maker of wonderful and weird films such as *The Worm Movie*, *Sun Puppet* and *Black Monster*, as well as poetess and often actress in Richard Kern's films, took off travelling and ended up in San Francisco. Similarly, Lydia Lunch now resides in New Orleans, where she runs the mini-empire of her independent record label and launches her spoken word tours. Meanwhile, Audrey Rose, who starred in Kern's *Submit To Me*, *The Evil Cameraman* and *Pierce*, departed



Street violence in Charlie Ahern's *DOIN' TIME IN TIMES SQUARE* (1991).

and later became a U.S. snowboarding champion.

Petty jealousies and arguments divided many of those who remained. Kern and Zedd, whose relationship was always a stormy affair, parted ways for good after Kern failed to appear at a Zedd-organized film show—leaving the audience without a night's diversion. They have not spoken since, Zedd waiting for an apology and Kern uninterested in providing one.

Time alone has made a difference. A generation of filmmakers, who in the early 80s were in their 20s, are now in their 30s. It's the beginning of a new decade, and what have they got? No money, that's for sure. The government grant curbacks and restrictions are not new to anyone, yet an interest from Europe and Japan provides hope.

Alyce Wittenstein, maker of stylish science fiction films, *Betaville* (1987) and *No Such Thing As Gravity* (1989), is at present making *The Deflowering* the third part of her trilogy *The Propaganda of Progress*, which will be released as a feature. Wittenstein recently returned from a tour of Japan, as did Richard Kern from Denmark and Germany, and Ela

Troyano from Spain.

Despite these changes, people continue to make and show films. The New York Film Festival Downtown 1990-91 took the form of a series at Webo, a now-extinct venue. Ela Troyano produces *La Misma Onda*, a showcase for Latino film and performance at PS 122. Recently, there was a two night film series at CBGB's Gallery, and Matthew Harrison's Film Crash program circulates

shows of primarily 16mm film in various venues. The Anthology Film Archives reopened in 1989, after being closed for seven years. Run by Jonas Mekas, a filmmaker himself, this provides a showplace for many filmmakers.

Contributing to this renewal is a decline of drug use within the once perpetually mind-altered community—the perception about those who do still indulge becoming one of disrespect for their lack of self-control. As one anonymous filmmaker says, "It's a lot different now that we aren't so fucked up."

Nothing can replace the experiences these filmmakers have gone through, nor diminish the importance of their work. They, as well as others like Michael Wolfe, M. Henry Jones and Jon Moritsugu, are dedicated to expressing themselves. And, so long as they are inspired by the horrors and perversity of New York City, they will make films there.

Fortunately, we can watch them, in safety, from here. **frvg**



**NO
THRILLS
LEFT...**

AN INTERVIEW WITH

RICHARD KERN

by Christian Gore

What turns you on now, since you've done it all?

Basically taking photographs of women. I don't know. . . that's a tough one, let's come back to that. I'd like to learn to ski.
(Laughs)

What was one of your greatest thrills?

I fucked a pregnant woman when I was in college.

Was it your baby?

No, that actually made it more thrilling. That gave me a big thrill, it was some kind of a dirty pleasure. Anything I can work up some kind of guilt or taboo about gives me some pleasure. Everyone's like that but it takes more to get me aroused. If I could get off on everyday ordinary sex, I would be thrilled. I think if I laid off jacking off for some time, I could build up so I could do it again. What's the next question?

This is a long time after the days when I used to think I was subverting something...



PHOTO BY:
MICHAEL LEVINE

What do you hope to subvert in terms of people's thinking since you're moving up to the feature film format now?

The whole feature thing I can look at in terms of probability. That's something that may happen. . . As far as what we are going to try and deal with are things that haven't been done already, like incest and gay sex. The main character is a black policeman. Basically we are going to show all kinds of sex and violence and random stupidity and Lydia ranting. That's about as offensive as you can get—listening to Lydia talk.

I'll agree with you on that, wholeheartedly!!!!!!

What can you subvert these days? (Pause) This is a long time after the days when I used to think I was subverting something, if you know what I mean.

You're just trying to make money?

Well I'm not even doing that. I'm trying to pursue what interests me, which is trying to film things which have not been filmed. Have you seen the *Forbidden Hollywood* series?

No.

All these movies that were done pre-[Hayes] code. I watched one the other day with that hot fox Barbara Stanwyck in it and she took off her clothes five times. I like to make movies that have people taking off their clothes in the same way. I couldn't believe it. They just kept saying over and over, "It's time to get undressed."

What exactly do you say to women to coax them into being photographed—where they're dominating or dominated—how do you use your manly wiles to get them to do exactly what you want?

I think it's more my boyish shines I use. Most of the people that work with me feel that what I'm doing is somewhat artistic or else they've seen

my films and are influenced by them or else they're just willing to do what I want to get their face around or something and they realize this is a fast way to do that. For example, Annabelle Davies, the girl in *Nazi*, she'll do anything.

She doesn't care who sees it or what it's used for.

What's her phone number?

(Laughs) I don't know if I'm giving you any deep answers or anything like that. I feel intimidated talking to the mighty Chris Gore.

Fuck that!

It was different a long time ago.

What do you mean?

Give me break!

I pull my punches these days. I'm so much more inhibited these days.

I look back and I can't believe what an asshole I was—still am. I look back and think "How could I have printed all those Nick Zedd articles!" That's the main thing I regret.

I look back and see I was the type of person I hate. I'm still that person I guess, but at that time I was a little less uninhibited, you probably were too.

Have you ever considered getting a grant—?

(Interrupting) There would be no hope, no chance. David Wojnarowicz [who starred in *You Killed Me First*] got singled out by this moral majority group who used one of his paintings. . . well they took a part of a painting of Jesus shooting up and mailed it all around the country as an example of what kind of stuff gets funding from the NEA. David wasn't even funded, it was just that a gallery that he was in got funding from the NEA. He went through this whole court battle and he won but the fucking court only awarded him one dollar in damages.

Annabelle Davies, star of Kern's *NAZI* (1991)

**The most
frequently
asked question
I get is, "Why
do you make
these films?"
I give up, why?**

Shooting Linda Serbu on the set of BITCHES.



CHARLES PRICH

I'm trying to pursue what interests me, which is trying to film things which have not been filmed.

I don't think your films can be considered underground anymore—they've been seen by so many people and are widely distributed on video cassette—

Whether they are underground or not, my first interest is photographing people. I have three girls that I want to photograph right now that I'm waiting to shoot. One in oil, one with her hands tied that I thought might look good, the other one I haven't even thought of what to do with her. For me photography is like a sexual act, filmmaking, photography and so on.

Do you intend on looking at the photos later and beating off?

That thrill has worn off. Once you know the ins and outs, once you realize there are smells attached to humans. I like taking photographs, I like shooting things. I'm going to shoot something next week. . . this girl who said she's going to sew up her pussy, basically. I figured that'd be worth filming.

Will there be actual piercing involved?

Yeah, the whole bit. Not only that but she's already pierced all over the place. I've seen a bunch of piercing movies but we were just going to try and think of new places to pierce. It's not going to be long and drawn out like *Pierce*, I just want to make this really arty looking. The punchline

Getting Lung Leg's feet for YOU KILLED ME FIRST.

is—sew up the pussy! If I could get someone to cut their dick off, I'd be happening. It's all basically just getting people to take their clothes off within some pre-text 'cause, I guess that's where my fantasy life is.

What's the thing you enjoy most about showing your films to an audience?

The part I like the most is when they come up to me afterward and say, "Here's the money." I did enjoy this movie called *Razor*, where this girl shaves her pussy. In the movie the pussy gets bigger and bigger on the screen until there's just this giant pussy there. It cracks me up that these people that are coming to see these art movies just sit there basically just watching a shitty version of a girl shaving her pussy.

That kind of stuff I find really amusing. My film *The Evil Cameraman* makes me kind of nervous when I watch it

Even when the woman takes a dominant role, you're still in charge because you're behind the camera

I guess, yeah. That movie makes me nervous when I'm showing it.

Why?

Because it's just funny to sit there wondering what people are thinking while I tie up all these girls.

I definitely think that a jail sentence would apply. (Laugh) What about your feature project?

I get the equipment and the film but I don't get any money.

MONTANA HUSTON

What would you do with a million dollars for a movie?

A million dollars? If I had a million dollars I'd go live on a farm.

Let's say 50 thousand bucks, something that would finance a Kern project.

I would just throw it into a Lydia movie. Basically, I would use part of the money to just kick back and actually write some shit out. I'd pay someone to do all the bullshit.

Did you promise never to fuck Lydia Lunch?

I don't know if I promised that, but I never did it. What can I say, this is in a fucking magazine. I was probably too high when I made that statement or promise. I also became blood brothers with this gang of thieves in San Francisco a few years ago and I couldn't tell you what that was about either. Ask me some more film-related questions.

What is Richard Kern's style of filmmaking?

I can't stand shots that go very long at all. Actually in the last thing I did, *The Bitches*, I actually left some shots that were 30 seconds long, because it was sex.

What Presidential candidate do you like?

Jerry Brown, dude. I find him amusing. It would be hilarious if he and Pat Buchanan ran against each other.

Film-related questions, lets see... tell me about your paper route when you were a kid.

I used to always peep on my customers, that's how I got my voyeuristic tendencies I'd imagine. There was the "bad people's" house. They had loads of pornography in their garage, which I broke into often. That's where I first met hippies too.

What famous person would you like to see your films?

Maybe Madonna.

**...this girl who
said she's going
to sew up
her pussy...
I figured that'd
be worth filming.**



Escape artist Kern in Cassandra Stark's
WE ARE NOT TO BLAME.

If you could fuck Madonna, what way would you do it?

With a rubber. (Laugh) I'd cum on her tits. I'd jerk off on her... but who wouldn't?

Why do Germans love your films?

They're as uptight as I am. Basically anal retentive, the whole fucking country seems like New Yorkers.

You're taken more seriously in Europe—why is that?

I'm taken seriously here, too! The most frequently asked question I get is, "Why do you make these films?" I give up, why? The next one is "So you're infatuated with violence?" That's always the question.

Do you think your films cause destructive behavior?

Recently a person came up to me and said after my watching my film that he went out and did all this vandalism and got arrested. After a show in Sweden some guy came up and said, "You know, I feel so funny now, so peculiar. It's a feeling I usually associate with sexual excitement, except I'm not sexually excited." I thought that pretty well described it. I've also been told by someone that they watched *Fingered* and then had rough sex.

If you could influence people with your films, what would you make them do?

Make them nervous or anxious.

What videos do you have in your collection that would shock me?

Rubber Man Does Enema and *National Lampoon's European Vacation*, what else?

Is there any thrill left for you?

Going with my girlfriend to a nudist colony was exciting. Seeing her naked among all these people was a real turn on. Going to Action Park here in New York was exciting. They have 50 water slides so that was extremely thrilling. I know that sounds stupid but this was really thrilling. Just travel, I guess. I like riding my bike, shit, what can I say? **FTYB**

BEAUTY,
BEAST,
OR...

LYDIA

LUNCH

Interview by David Williams

One part spontaneous genius and one part raving bitch, Lydia Lunch is widely worshiped as a vociferous, black (and often scantily) clad madonna. Does she really need an introduction?



BO COW

After being interviewed in the 1977 rockumentary Punking Out ("Why am I at CBGB's)? Because the Dead Boys are great fucks!") and appearing in such early underground films as Beauty Becomes The Beast, Rome '78 and Scott and Beth B.'s audience testing Black Box, Lydia Lunch was lauded as the "the most stellar of the Super 8 superstars" by the panting press. But it was only after collaborating with Richard Kern on the bleakly erotic The Right Side of My Brain and the horrorshow Fingered, that she came into her own as a cinematic force to be reckoned with.

Much to her disgust, Lydia has become one of the most recognizable players of the Transgression era. While she bristles with contempt when associated with the Nick Zeddlabeled movement, she is its curvaceous embodiment.

Currently based in New Orleans, Lydia never betrayed her rough and tumble reputation for blunt honesty during this interview, but was also surprisingly gracious and warm.

What ignited the explosion of filmmaking in New York through the 1980's?

Probably escapism. In New York at that period, as it has continued, things began to just disintegrate. The 70's were a pretty easy time in New York. It was violent and ugly. But at the same time it wasn't as out of control as it is today. The danger zones were still pocketed in areas you could just avoid, but as more degeneration began to take over, especially with crack and dope, people were driven out of the streets and into themselves and into their apartments. Things started getting worse, more expensive, more dangerous with more drug dealing on the corner. There was more harassment. It just kept driving people further inside, just to escape death. I think Kern's "porn-pop," like *Submit To Me Now*, was just a distraction, as an alternative to the way that sex was being pumped at you to sell everything but itself.

Why did they choose filmmaking as a form of rebellion as opposed to rock music?

Maybe they saw how lousy all the bands were back in the early 80's and decided that wasn't for them. Everyone came from a different background, from different places.

There weren't any native New Yorkers in the group?
FUCK NO.

I think they came from a different perspective, more interested in art or photography to begin with, that maybe they weren't the right type to rock with their balls behind a



BETH B

Lydia's softer side in Beth B.'s
THANATOPSIS.

guitar. I don't know why people started making films, but it actually started in the mid and late 70's with Beth and Scott B. and Vivienne Dick, who were part of a first surge. I don't know whether the fact that they just did it inspired other people to say, "We can do it too." It was wide open.

What was Beth and Scott B.'s take on what happened to filmmaking in the 80's?

I don't think they had much respect for it. They came from a more politicized background. They were doing films that were more in line with what I was doing in spoken word a few years later. Dealing with social issues instead of social rejects, which is some of what Transgression dealt with. I don't know if they felt related to it or not, it's not like they were the first people to pick up a Super 8 camera and why should Beth B. take responsibility for the kind of films Nick Zedd makes?

Do you think ideological inbreeding helped kill the Cinema of Transgression?

I think everything is cyclical. Inbreeding... I don't know if incest is a good or bad thing. Things just have to splinter, people have to go off to the next thing. Also, when you're doing something to the extreme the first time around, how often can you repeat that format? That's why with Kern and I it took so long in planning our next atrocity.

Fingered and Right Side Of My Brain were made fairly close together, but they were also two sides of the same coin. That subject was done with, so now it's taken us seven years to get on to the next thing because, first of all, I've been doing a million things. Secondly, it's not that we have to top ourselves, but I want to feel that the next thing we make is really complete and reflects what those seven years have taught us. I want to stay with the same format; Super 8, black and white, thirty minutes, but it has to be taken somewhere else. We don't want to repeat ourselves.

Is the Cinema of Transgression guilty of repetition and

preaching to the converted?

That's your term, not mine, and let's cut this off right now. First of all, it's not like I perform in the same places year after year, also, as I said, I'm not involved with them. I delve into that scene with Kern only and don't think I'm part of that movement. So far as "preaching to the converted" in general, for myself personally, even if people have been following me for the last ten years, I can't expect that they "get it." It's not like I tramp through the same terrain and format year after year, because I don't. I'm very conscious of what I do. That's why I did *Thanatopsis* with Beth B. last year, because it's going to get to a different area. It's not like I'm trying to target or stay in any specific ghetto, but you do something and throw it out there. It's not my job after it's finished to patrol or control who sees it and spread the word farther than it will go by itself. What I like about the Kern films is that they are in the ghetto. I like the ghetto. I like specialty. I like elitist. I like being as far underground as I am, I don't think my position has changed in the last thirteen years. I'm not on a treadmill, but it's like choosing what's behind door number one, two or three. Making progress but keeping my perspective. It's not like mass communication is my field of endeavor. Telling the fucking truth is my field of endeavor, which limits my audience right there. Period. Kern and I had the choice, the dilemma, to go with 16mm on our next film, but from the start we said, "Why?" It's not like it would make the film any better. Maybe it could have a bigger market because people would have the presumption that, because it's on 16mm, it must be something more or different, but it wouldn't. Why can't it be what it is—a fucking Super 8, black and white, thirty minute film that you aren't going to get anywhere else? That's the format I like, but now I have to fill in the blanks left over from *Right Side* and *Fingered*. Who knows when we'll start, soon I hope.

What's the story?

It's about my marriage to a black cop

who I set up to take the fall for my own scandalous crimes. And then I run away to my brother in New Orleans, who will be played by Pete Haskell, who was in *Fingered*, and the black cop comes down South to find me. The punchline being "we don't like cops around here," which means the same as we don't like niggers, we don't like punks, we don't like hippies, or anybody different from

Bo Covert



Lydia '92: The new, improved, tattooed model.

us. It's really based on the dichotomy of the South. What I see here in Louisiana is very racially calm on the surface, however, it's really one of the most racist states in the country.

What is the advantage of working with friends or people you know well as opposed to "real" actors?

For the Kern films it's important to use people who can understand what we're trying get at, and I don't think the average actor can grasp that. Not that it would be out of their boundaries, but I don't think they would get what kind of power base or lack of power base we're coming from. I would like to work with some real actors, on the right thing. But these are character actors, in that they are

playing the characters they really are. We're not asking people to act in these films. We just want them to be themselves. No one believes for a second that Marty Nations was acting in *Fingered* because he isn't. Believe me, I lived with the guy for two years and I know it's not an act. As terrifying as it appears.

The advantage also being that you don't have to convince an outsider of what might have to be done.

Right, to get the point across. And that can be pretty fucking ugly at times. Yeah, I can see it now. We'll get Winona [Ryder] and bend her over a car and then pretend we're fucking her with a gun. I'm sure she's going to go for that.

It seems pretty far outside the realm of possibilities.

And let's keep it that way.

How did you psych yourself into doing some of things you did for the camera, especially in Fingered?

I'd done them a hundred thousand times before, it's not like I was a virgin. Also, we were dealing with an experience that had really happened. A lot of that film was pretty true, the characters were true. We were traversing territory that me, Marty Nations and, to some degree, Kern had covered before, this was familiar fucking territory. But also, we had to go into the past and relive what was an important part of my life, with that kind of behavior. I felt I had to document that kind of behavior to get over it, and I was already half way over it, so that was painful. The same with Marty. I've known him for ten or more years and his sister is a really good friend; they're like family. A fucked up family, but a family. I had to get to the other side of the psychological battlefield, war within myself, the good twin versus the evil twin—I had to buck up and pay the piper. Also there was a perverse fascination to go back in my life. At the time I was living with Foetus and our relationship was one of the most positive ones I've ever had, dealing with a lot of positive energy and creativity as



Marty Nations has Lunch in **FINGERED**.

opposed to negative, self-destructive, death-oriented, sexual psychosis. So I suppose it was almost voyeuristic of me to just jump back into the evil twin and relive some of these sick fantasies.

Fingered is raw and crude but of very high technical quality. What made you work in that direction of perfection?

Because I saw one of Nick Zedd's films and decided I never wanted to make a film that looked like that, to be quite frank. I had high standards in film coming from Beth and Scott B., working with them, and I didn't see any reason to settle for less. I'd seen *Manhattan Love Suicides* and knew Kern was capable of it. That's why I never made a film with Nick Zedd. He fascinates me while he repulses me, but that's okay. . . I just don't think his forté is filmmaking.

Do you have a different take on filmmaking since you haven't technically made films yourself?

I know what I want to see. I know how something should look and what looks the best, and Richard translates that to film. I trust him completely because he knows what I want to see. We're on the same wavelength, so I

don't have to know. He knows.

What's impressed you the most about your work with Kern? Or made any kind of difference?

The trips we made by ourselves in the preplanning of these things. When we'd steal these hours away and just get down to the nitty gritty. Our mutual psychosis is so similar and we're so fucking much alike. What I dug about Kern when I first met him is that both him and Brian Moran, who'll probably kill me if I reveal this! [Laughs] How I met them was that I went to Carlo McCormick and asked if he knew anyone who did short performances, because I wanted to do spoken word with little acts—blood and

violence, just action—he recommended Richard Kern and Brian Moran, the Blood Boys. So I called them up, proposed my idea and they agreed to do it. But what I didn't know was that they had formed a pact to NOT fuck me. As if that was my intention, to rape them both. Great, they wish! [Laughs] Their philosophy at the time was that you can't fuck a woman you respect, which to me . . . I can't fuck a man I don't respect. So that was kind of a hook for me. Those scumbags, talking about me like that, assuming that I'd want to, and then just having that attitude toward women.

"Don't fuck a woman, don't get involved with a woman you could respect because then you can humiliate her and degrade her as

much as you want to." Bull-fucking-shit! I'm not going to tell you if we broke that pact or not, I'll leave that to your imagination, but that interested me. So that was it. Kern and I would have this time between filmings during the years when we could just take these trips. We didn't even have to discuss the films. The narration for *Right Side of My Brain* was written after the film was made, because I knew and Kern knew what I wanted to say. So the high point for me in my relationship with Richard Kern is that he gets me, he understands me completely. We have the same fucking disease, and instead of having a relationship and killing each other, we make these films. He's one of the few men who really gets where I'm coming from and is not frightened of it or running after my ass.

That's the high point. There's no specific shot, scene, or location, it's the ongoing effect.

Do you watch those films anymore?

Fuck no, I make new ones every night, honey. **(FTV6)**

I'd done them a hundred thousand times before, it's not like I was a virgin.

Lunch pins Lung Leg to the dirt in Kern's horrorshow **FINGERED**.



HOW DO YOU KILL
SOMETHING THAT
WON'T DIE?

WHERE DO YOU RUN
WHEN THEY'RE
EVERYWHERE?



THE
DEAD
NEXT DOOR

The neighborhood's gone to HELL.



(Three and 1/2 stars)

"THE DEAD NEXT DOOR is a loving tribute to George Romero, and outrageous, gruesome fun on its own...destined for cult status..."

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THE DEAD NEXT DOOR

The neighborhood's gone to HELL.

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RAISING THE

ZEDD

An
Interview
with
Nick Zedd

By David E. Williams

NICK ZEDD WAS DEAD, or so said a legitimate-looking prank obituary that ran in *FILM THREAT* two years ago. The cause of death? A terminal tapeworm infestation originally contracted when Zedd demonstrated how to wolf down animal intestines on the set of his 1979 cinematic tale of everyday cannibalism, *They Eat Scum*.

And a few people actually believed it was real.

What resulted was an angry mix of accusations and malicious laughter. Readers inundated us with mail: both burning indictments against our right to joke about someone outside the Hollywood establishment and hearty congratulations for finally scraping Zedd off our shoes.

Now, after Zedd's unwilling twenty-four month sabbatical, we have this interview to cap our look back at what was probably his best-known creation; the patchwork coalition of filmmakers he dubbed The Cinema Of Transgression.

Though contacting Nick didn't require tarot cards, a ouji board or a psychic, it was troublesome. After I left several messages on a creaky sounding answering machine in New York City, a woman describing herself as "Nick Zedd's secretary" called back with a phone number where he could be reached. A quick dial later, I was talking to Nick Zedd, who's flat nasal voice does in fact have a certain beyond-the-grave quality.

What kind effect did our obituary have on your life? I understand you were laughed off in one town where you were trying to set up a screening with them saying "Nick Zedd is dead."

No, that's a lie.

So nothing adverse came of it? [Long, long silence.] Well, I wouldn't know. With the kind of phony people you assholes are talking to, maybe you're getting stories about it that are totally off the wall. What was your intention with that?

What do you think? I could only speculate as to what your motivations would be for printing lies.

Zedd (surprise) plays a psycho in Kern's *SUBMIT TO ME Now*.



Photo by R. Kern

What makes you think I care about your dismal opinion? Why open your stupid mouth?



I suppose it was some kind of underhanded attempt to hurt my business by promoting [Richard] Kern and [Alyce] Wittenstein. Wittenstein getting together a bunch of half-truths and lies and distorting them in print in an attempt to convince people that I was no longer around. It was a malicious, underhanded and retarded thing to do. All it did was destroy your credibility and give a lot of people the chance to be smug and say, "Ha, ha, I'm glad it happened." Even though it didn't.

Lydia Lunch told me that she and Kern worked on their films toward some degree of technical perfection because she "saw one of Nick Zedd's films and decided I never wanted to make a film like that."

[Long silence.] That just shows her ignorance. She never really understood underground films. She has no awareness of the avant garde. To apply technical criterion to a medium wherein one is working with so little money, to place so much importance on the surface than on the content is in itself reactionary, buying into the Hollywood mentality. It's a form of prejudice that ignorant people use to

write off certain art forms. The same was said about punk music when it began. Bands like the Sex Pistols, people said they couldn't play their instruments. It's completely missing the whole point. It's attitude, content and honesty. That's what it's really about. These people who put down my early films because they were shot in Super 8 are simply unaware of what I've done in the last three or four years. I've been working with better cameramen, like Theo Steffano, who's shooting my film *War Is Menstrual Envy*; which is as technically "slick," if that's what's required, as anything Kern or these other people has done.

What's the film about?

A three part film that won't be released until it's finished. I'm still working on the third. It's a big film, a long film. [Long pause—the sound of paper shuffling in the background.] One second, hold on. [Long pause, then he starts reading a press release.] *War Is Menstrual Envy* . . . [Another long pause.]

Are you looking for the description I wrote

about it?

[Surprised.] Did you write one?

[Suspiciously.] But you never saw it. . .

Based on what I've heard and the photos I'd seen. I didn't review the film because I haven't seen it.

Well, okay, I've got these notes . . .

The film takes place in November, in the year 2092, following death by radiation poisoning of nine-tenths of the human race. A cult of sea-worshippers, led by a human deity, appears to form a telepathic alliance with the world dolphin population to bring about the destruction of Christianity and Islam.

Sounds like quite the epic.

[Laughs] Yeah, it's not a narrative film, but it tells a story that has to be perceived in each person's own way. Interpreted by each person. It's very different from anything else I've done.

How are you funding the film, are you still driving a cab?

No, I have an investor. A patron.

Who have you conned into this?

I can't reveal that information.

[Rumor has it that Zedd raised the money by posing nude in a certain gay porn magazine.]

Will we get a copy of the film for review?

[Laughs.] Only if you buy one from me.

Have you ever been accused of being paranoid?

[Long pause.] No.

*I've read your book *Bleed* and found it to be more a substandard recounting of the women you've fucked than a real novel. Do you think being a writer is your strong suit?*

One of them. But what makes you think I care about your dismal opinion? Why open your stupid mouth?

Because otherwise this would just be a long blank space in the magazine. I have to fill it up with something, right? That's what this is, the filler I need to round out the pages.

You're the filler. The whole magazine is filler.

Do you feel the Cinema of Transgression failed because it was simply a tiny inbred group around which the same ideas circled?

If that were the case, you wouldn't be printing this issue. But you don't

Don't you lay claim to your crown as the chief manipulator and propagandist?

No, all I did was allow the world to be aware of a movement that was subjected to a censorship of omission.

Or could it be that no one cared?

Nobody does care about real art. This country hates art. This country hates creativity, inhibition and originality. Anything original is going to be obscured or hidden. I just tried to make the world more aware of what was going on. And it wasn't just me, it was all the other filmmakers that are going to be in this issue.

Is having the films seen as important as the mystique and myths that surround them? Like War Is Menstrual Envy, I've heard stories about it, but will it be released, will it be seen, or is that important?
I've shown it around a lot.

As a work-in-progress?

Well, it's a masterpiece, but yeah, a work-in-progress. But it's not easy when you don't have some kind of support structure, some kind of network-
ing. But the film

takes some kind of aesthetic awareness that most people don't have. Some people think hype and self-promotion is what it's all about, but it's not. But I don't care if people want to misunderstand, because I'm just going to make my films like I always did whether I'm censored or blacklisted or not.

Is everybody else wrong, or do you deserve the support you think you do?

Well, you're all so preoccupied with moving backwards. I'm just waiting for you all to catch up.

So everyone's moving backwards but you? Right.

In an interview a long time ago you were asked if you were Jesus Christ and you said, "Yes." What's the answer in 1992? [Laughs] I was kidding, there is no Jesus Christ. I don't know—you don't need idols or myths. Each person . . . I don't know, it was a joke. The answer was a joke too. I don't expect people to worship me, but I do expect them to respect what I've done and the time it's taken to do it. And the fact that I'm not getting any help from anyone.

Why is that?

This is a very conservative time we're living in. And a lot of people are very cynical. But if this country goes down the drain, people can always either fight back or go into exile.

Have you ever thought about leaving the country?

Sure.

Zedd and Kembra Pfahler in his still unfinished WAR IS MENSTRUAL ENVY.



Has anyone ever offered you a ticket to get the hell out of town. Like, "Here's a bus ticket, just leave New York?"
No, but I do want to leave America. And as soon as I can get the money, I will. I'm sure that will please all of you people.

FTVG



Zedd in drag . . . No improvement.

really understand what it's all about, so whatever you do will be wrong. You have to be here, you have to see the films.

You know, I think you were right about something. We are big and what goes along with that is that we could crush you. You can't crush me, you're nothing. You tried to kill me and here I am, still around.

Like a cockroach scurrying around New York that we just can't fucking kill?
You're like a piece of shit floating around in the toilet, but someday the toilet will get unclogged and you'll go down. [Laughs.] I wonder how much of this will get censored.

Have you built your whole career on ego and hype rather than filmmaking?
That's a lie.



FESTIVAL IN BEANTOWN

Writer/director Josh Becker goes on the road to the Boston Film Fest with his much wondered-about film LUNATICS: A LOVE STORY. What was all the wondering for? Whether or not it will get released!

by Josh Becker

AUGUST 23, 1991

I have just been informed by The Boston Film Festival that my film, *Lunatics: A Love Story* will be screening three times on the final night of the festival, along with *Sex, Drugs & Rock & Roll* and *The Fisher King*. Not bad company. The film will get its first reviews out of this. Oh my.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1991

The Boston Film Festival has undoubtedly begun. I have a flight booked, but I have no room. The festival is paying for the flight, but I'm paying for the room. I'm trying to work it out to get Ted Raimi (the star of the movie) and David "Goody" Goodman (the co-producer) to go in on it with me. No word as yet from either of them.

SEPTEMBER 12, 1991



Hank (Ted Raimi) dons Reynolds Wrap to save his damsel in distress.

I received a call today from a filmmaker in New York named Andy Kahan whose short film, *An American Mind*, will be attached to the beginning of *Lunatics*. He seemed young and eager and really wanted to meet me. Why?

SEPTEMBER 16, 1991

Ted and I are getting a room at The Marriott for \$150 a night, the festival discount rate. Goody backed out. That's \$150 from me for two nights. Fine.

Goody now has all of us, including me, scheduled to speak at Emerson College (his alma mater) at 7:30 P. M. on the day I arrive. My flight gets in at 7:00. And I've never been to Boston before. Right.

SEPTEMBER 17, 1991

I leave for Boston tomorrow. As yet I haven't been able to manage a ride to the airport. *Lunatics* got its first review



Hank (Raimi) and Nancy (Deborah Foreman) indulge in geeky love rituals.

today in *Variety*. It opens with, "If one can imagine *David and Lisa* crossed with *Evil Dead 2* by way of *Annie Hall*, one has a good idea of what *Lunatics: A Love Story* is like." It goes on say, "It's undeniably entertaining for those who enjoy sick, demented humor. . . the pic's a touching love story. . ." and "The acting is up to snuff. . ." I can certainly live with all of that.

We entered the film in many other festivals and were rejected by quite a few of them. At approximately \$300 a throw for entry fees, it was an expensive ordeal finding out that we did not get into: London, New York, Sundance, Telluride, Seattle, Palm Springs, Toronto or Berlin.

At the Houston Film Festival we won second place. The plaque hangs directly in front of my face over my desk. The back of it is signed by Ginger Rogers and Rod Stieger.

Since Boston isn't a competition, I don't dread the idea of losing, but reciprocally, there's no hope of win-

ning.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1991

My flight leaves at 10:30 A.M. so naturally I awoke at 5:00 A.M. I don't think I need that much time to get to the airport. It's now Ted, Goody, myself and Bruce Campbell (the producer) staying in the room.

I'm invisible here at Denny's. I

Since Boston isn't a competition, I don't dread the idea of losing, but reciprocally, there's no hope of winning.

keep holding up my coffee cup and the waitress walks right past.

I'm at the airport with an hour and fifteen minutes to kill. I just payed \$3.11 for a cup of coffee and two plain donuts. I love airports.

I struck up a conversation with an Australian woman in the airport restaurant. She was on her way to Halifax, then Glasgow. She had come

to see what Los Angeles was like and had just spent nine days in Orange County visiting a distant cousin. Since he was busy working he dropped her off at a shopping mall on his way to work in the morning and picked her up on the way home. And this was her first time ever leaving Australia.

What must she think of America?

Well, I hope she has a better time in Scotland. She pronounced my name, "Joosh Baykah."

I'm aboard the plane, a Boeing 757, which is quite small and has 12" TVs affixed to the ceiling, however I hear they're very safe. To my left I have a screaming infant and to my right I have

a guy in a black leather jacket and hand painted blue jeans ferociously chewing his gum. I guess I should just be thankful he's not cracking it.

Now he's cracking it. Man, he's really honking away! I'm going crazy!!

Well, it turns out the guy with the gum is named Bill Fishman. He wrote and directed *Tapeheads*, which I've

seen, and he just completed *Car 54 Where Are You?* for Orion so he doesn't know when it's coming out. We talked for most of the flight (he spit out his gum, thank God). He too will be on the festival symposium.

I arrived at hotel to find that Ted had not registered the room under both of our names and since he was not to be found, I wasn't allowed to go to the room. I left my luggage with the porter and started off for Emerson College which I was informed was "just across the street. Take Exeter to Beacon and turn right." I then walked many blocks up Exeter, turned right and walked many more blocks up Beacon before I saw Ted, Bruce and Goody walking toward me. I missed the Emerson lecture: We then all walked back to the hotel where the festival was having a dinner for the newly arrived symposium guests. I had a very thick piece of swordfish that was excellent.

SEPTEMBER 19, 1991

Our big day at the festival began by

reading good reviews of the picture in both *The Boston Globe* and *The Boston Herald*. *The Globe* said, "Delightfully Twisted Lunatics, *Lunatics: A Love Story* is the feel-good movie of the year—for paranoid schizophrenics. This hilarious and twisted little corker was written and directed by Josh Becker. . ." *The Herald* said, "If the publishers of *Mad Magazine* decided to make a romantic comedy, the result would be a lot like *Lunatics: A Love Story*. . . Ted Raimi is hilarious. . . Deborah Foreman gives her sweetest performance since *Valley Girl*. . . there are several funny special effects sequences. . ." This is great.

We went swimming in the hotel pool, went out for a big breakfast at The Stage Deli on Boylston St., got back to the hotel in time for our first interview, then went out to lunch for our second. None of us were hungry at all, but we ate big meals of fish because it was there. The interviewer from *The Herald* had very few questions so we all got silly and laughed a

lot. We then got into a limousine and were taken across the entire city to the WFNX studio to do another silly, three minute interview, rushed back to the hotel for another interview, then off to the theater for the first screening.

The festival screenings were held at the Loew's (sponsor of the festival) Copley Place Cinemas, a multi-plex in a shopping mall. The one hundred seat theater *Lunatics* was showing in was about two-thirds full. I made a couple of inane opening comments, then I took a seat in the very back with my compatriots, the lights dimmed and the "short" *An American Mind* began. Within just a few moments the film proved itself to be an extreme example of the slow, dull, cryptic, boring and pretentious genus of student film. But that wasn't enough, it soon became offensive as well. This was achieved when the young man in the lead was sodomized by his father on screen! The audience, as well as ourselves, was in agony. People began

Of course Josh looks stiff and nervous, HE'S DIRECTING!



walking out of the theater—ten minutes into the the short subject! My only possible gratification throughout this mental anguish was glancing back at Bruce and seeing how tortured he was. Several eternities later the older woman portraying the young man's mother strips naked, crawls across the dinner table and attempts to seduce him, but luckily (for the audience) fails, then the boy naturally kills her on a shard of glass. The film still wasn't nearly over and ten people had fled into the night. When it finally and thankfully did end, the lights came up and there was about a five minute break as the projectionist switched from 16mm to 35mm. Several more angry people took this chance to leave. Finally, when our light-hearted romantic comedy began, the remaining audience was in absolutely no mood to laugh. The film fell flat on its face. I left the theater after about twenty-five minutes and despairingly sat in the lobby and chain-smoked cigarettes. Bruce and Goody came out a long while later and we left for the symposium. Ted stayed to watch the rest of the film, then introduce the second screening.

I was informed upon entering the auditorium of Boston University that I was not a part of the symposium, but instead could have a good seat in the front row. I took this opportunity to tell Pam Henning, the woman who was running the festival, that the "short subject" showing before our film was offensive and had completely ruined our screening. I was expecting to be told that she was busy, the programs were printed and that was life. Instead, Pam went directly to a telephone, called the theater and had the film removed. I was impressed.

The panel members of the symposium were: Bruce Campbell, David Goodman, Eric Bogosian, Bobcat Goldthwait, Ismail Merchant, Bill Fishman, Joseph Vasquez (writer/director of *Hangin' With The Homeboys*), Marc Halprin from Miramax, Michael Barker from Orion Classics and a guy from Loew's Theaters whose name escapes me.



Bruce Campbell plays Ray, the arrogant, annoying boyfriend (DUH!).

Each person took a moment to explain how they had gotten into the film business (Eric Bogosian took about twenty minutes, but it was interesting), Bobcat Goldthwait was very funny, a few questions from the audience were taken, then it was over.

I was literally hustled into a cab and

People began walking out of the theater— ten minutes into the short subject!

before I knew what was going on I was at the closing night party, however I was still expected to introduce the third screening. The other passengers got out and I went back to the theater. Ted informed me that the second screening, which was a few seats short of sold out, minus the short subject, was a brilliant success. He said that they laughed all the way through the film. The third screening was a repeat of the second, although Ted insists the second was better. The third screening was wonderful. When we emerged I felt terrific. Some goofy-looking nerds surrounded me with video tape copies of my first film (*Thou Shalt Not Kill... Except*) and had me sign the boxes, many people congratulated me and shook my hand. The larger crowd was

around Bruce asking about the *Evil Dead* movies. I then came face to face with a tall, thin guy with a confused, disturbed expression on his face. I knew who it was without an introduction, this was Andy Kahan, maker of *An American Mind*.

"What happened to my movie?"

I paused for a moment considering the implications, then answered, "I had it removed."

"Why?"

"Because it was offensive."

Obviously you intended it to be offensive and it was. You succeeded with your intentions, but it was exactly the wrong movie to be showing before a light comedy."

"Whose responsible for this?"

"Me. And I've got to go now. It was nice meeting you."

Exit stage left.

The Boston Film Festival might be the turning point for getting *Lunatics* theatrically released. Without a theatrical release in Los Angeles it's almost as though the film never existed (my first film was released theatrically in twenty-two cities, including a fairly long run on 42nd St. in New York, but it was not released in L.A.

So I speak from first hand experience). What will become of the film is not in my hands, it's in the hands of the producers and distributors. Apparently people enjoy the picture, Houston indicated it and, as far

as I'm concerned, Boston proved it. Whether that has any bearing on it being released in theaters remains to be seen.

POSTSCRIPT—

Lunatics did finally play in Los Angeles and was greeted by good reviews, but the film still hangs in distribution limbo. Meanwhile, Becker fiercely contends that Hollywood can't appreciate a decent film.

Sadly, I think he's right. But I have my suspicions that this film never got the push it really needed from the inside either.

Josh is currently plotting his revenge—as well as his next film.

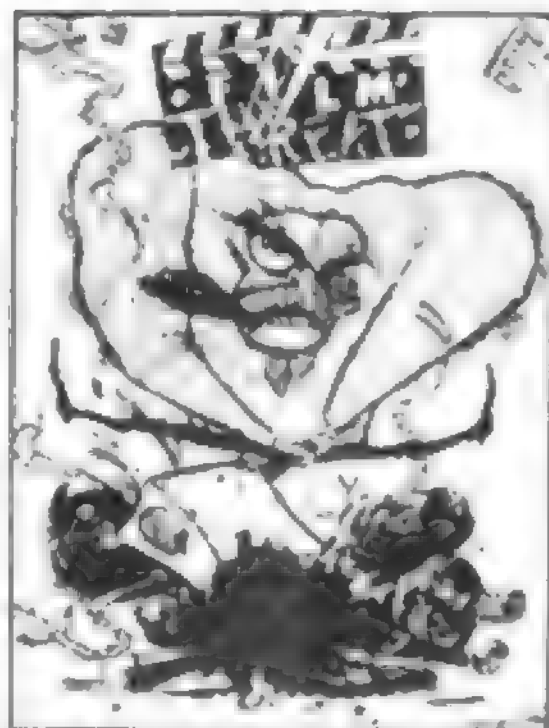


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BACK ISSUES



9 Terry Gilliam, Sam Raimi, Scott Spiegel, Josh Becker.



10 Nick Zedd, Stallone Contest, Politics, Comics.



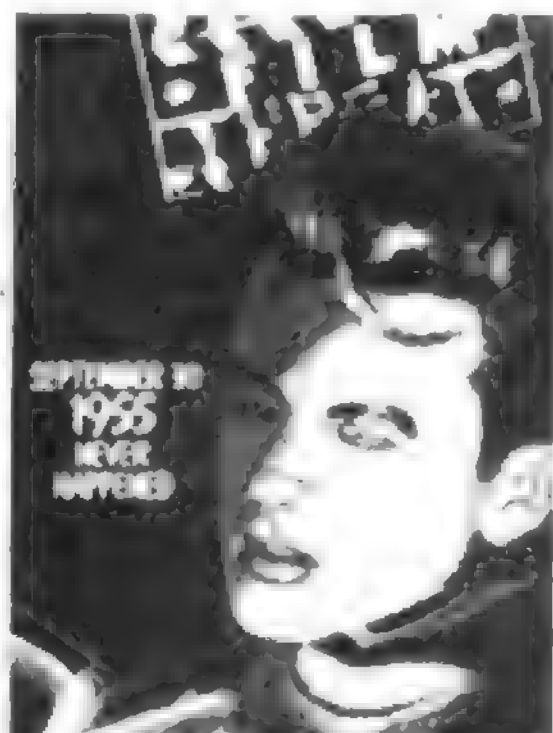
13 Charles Bukowski, Sam Raimi's Super 8 films.



14 Russ Meyer, Divine, Underground Elvis films.



16 Fassbinder, George Romero, Manson & More!



17 James Dean Issue, Elvira, George Kuchar.



19 Horror Issue, Clive Barker, Nick Cave, SRL.



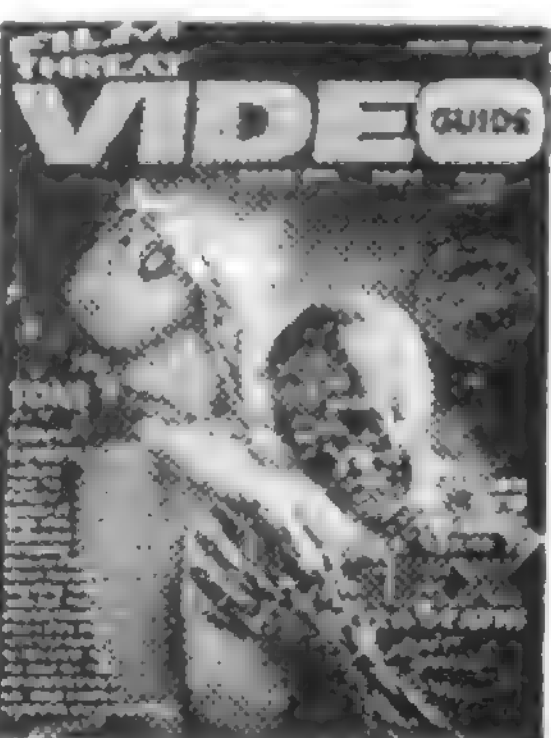
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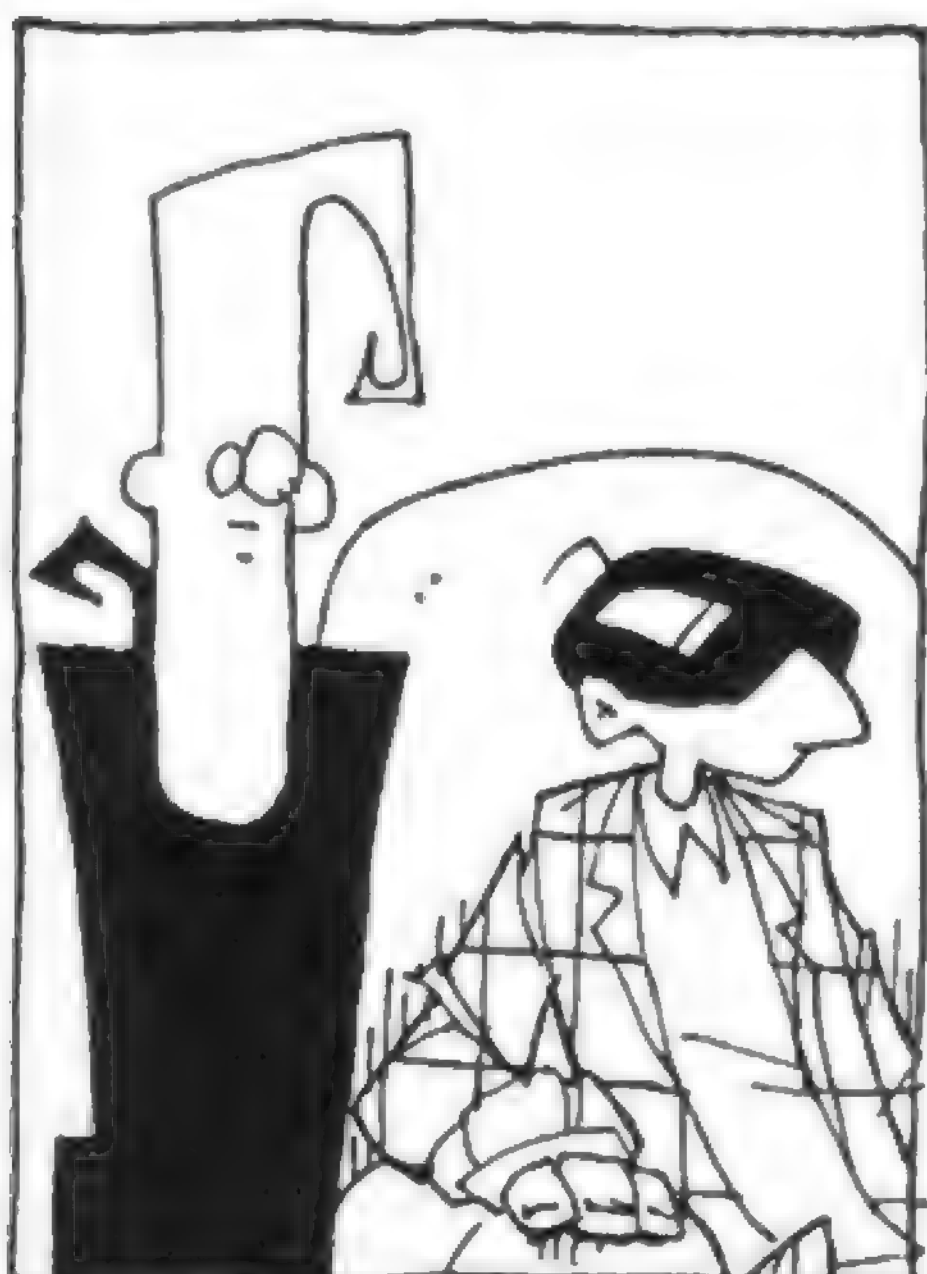
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THE MOST DISGUSTING THING I EVER SAW ©92 Scott

ONE DAY I WAS ON A BUS GOING TO WORK.



THERE WAS A GUY SITTING ACROSS FROM ME WHO HAD A TERRIBLE COUGH. HE WAS EITHER A HEAVY SMOKER OR VERY SICK (OR BOTH).



HE KEPT HACKING AWAY; THESE DEEP, DISGUSTING, PHLEGMY, BODY-FLACKING COUGHS.



AFTER EACH COUGH HE WOULD LEAN FORWARD AND LET A STREAM OF MUCUS POOL OUT OF HIS MOUTH ONTO THE FLOOR.



I FELT SO SKEEVED OUT I TURNED MY HEAD AWAY. I KEPT FIGHTING THE IMPULSE TO TURN AND LOOK AT HIM.



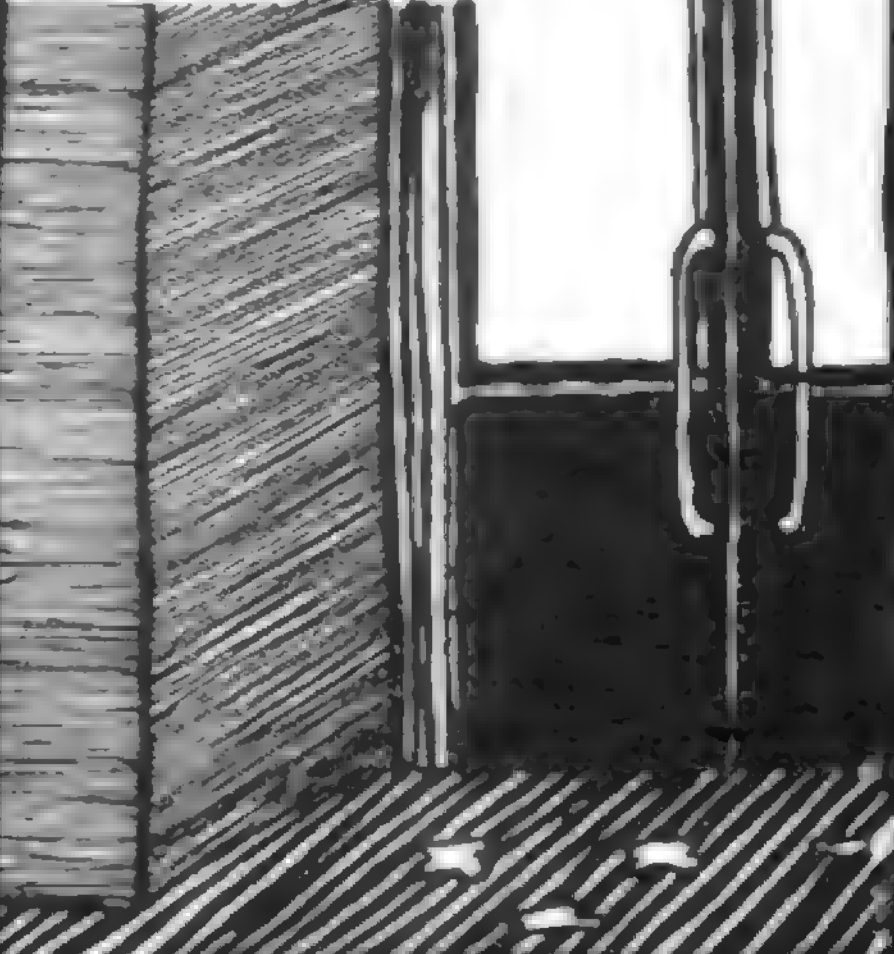
AFTER ABOUT 20 MINUTES HE GOT UP TO LEAVE. HE STOOD BY THE BACK DOOR COUGHING.



WHEN I GOT UP TO LEAVE I LOOKED AT THE CHAIR WHERE HE SAT. THERE WAS A POOL OF PHLEGM AND SPIT ON THE FLOOR ABOUT 9 OR 10 INCHES IN DIAMETER.



THERE WERE 2 OR 3 GOBS OF THE STUFF ON THE STAIRWAY BY THE BACK DOOR TOO. I FELT DISGUSTED AND ANGRY AT THE HUMAN RACE.



WHEN I GOT HOME I BOILED MY CLOTHES.





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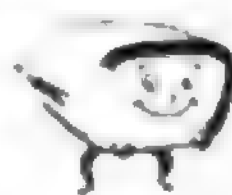
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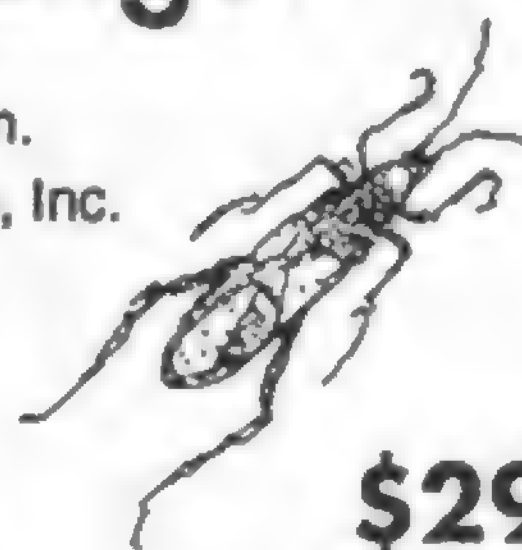
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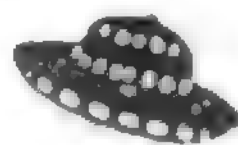
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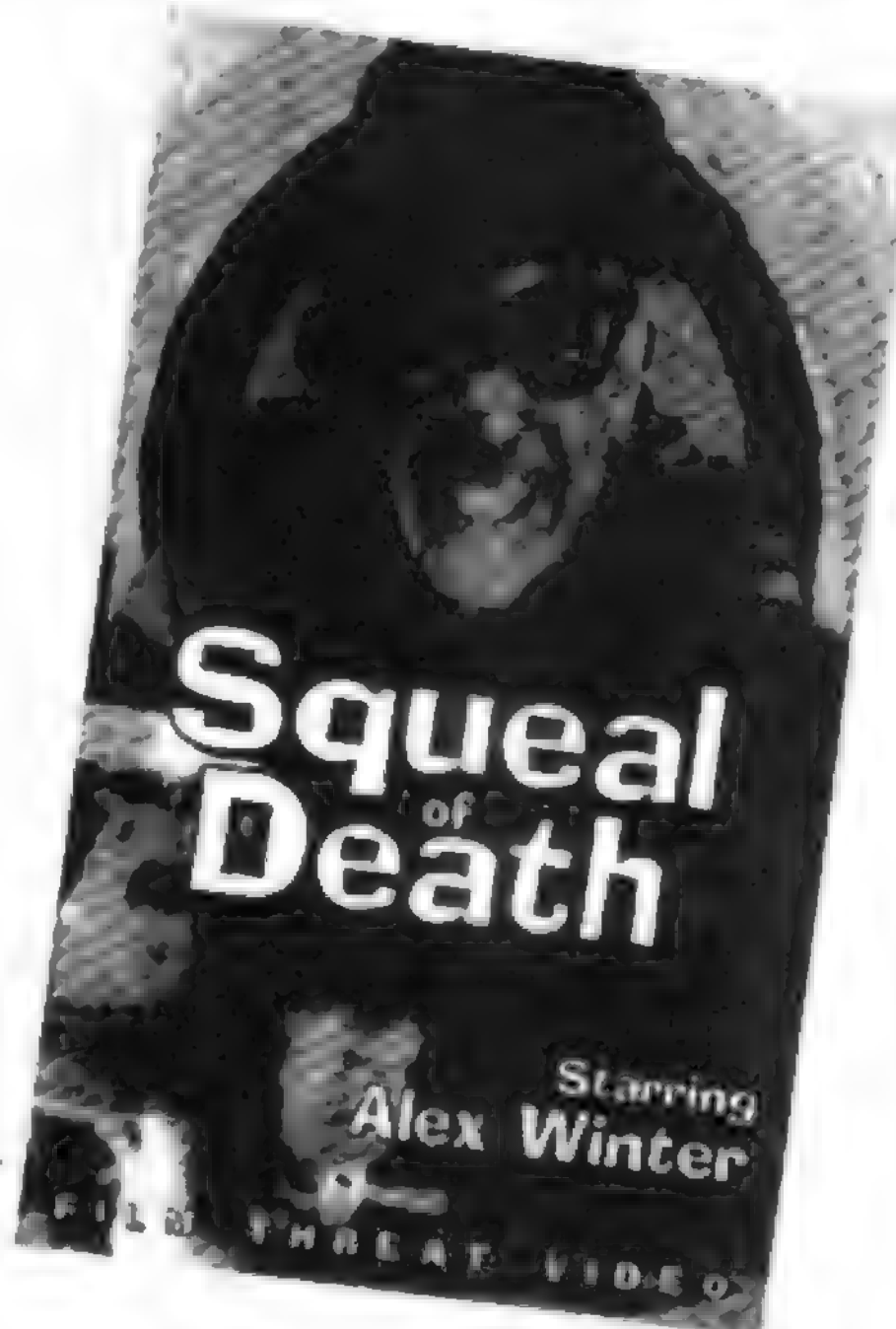
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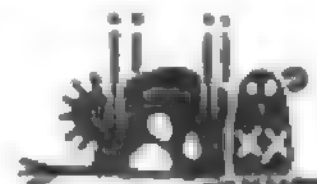


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SCOTT SPIGEL AS HE CALLED
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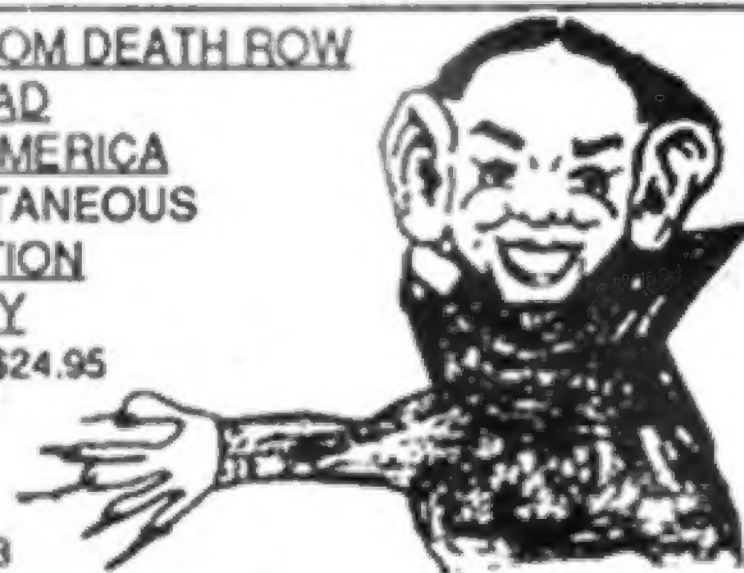
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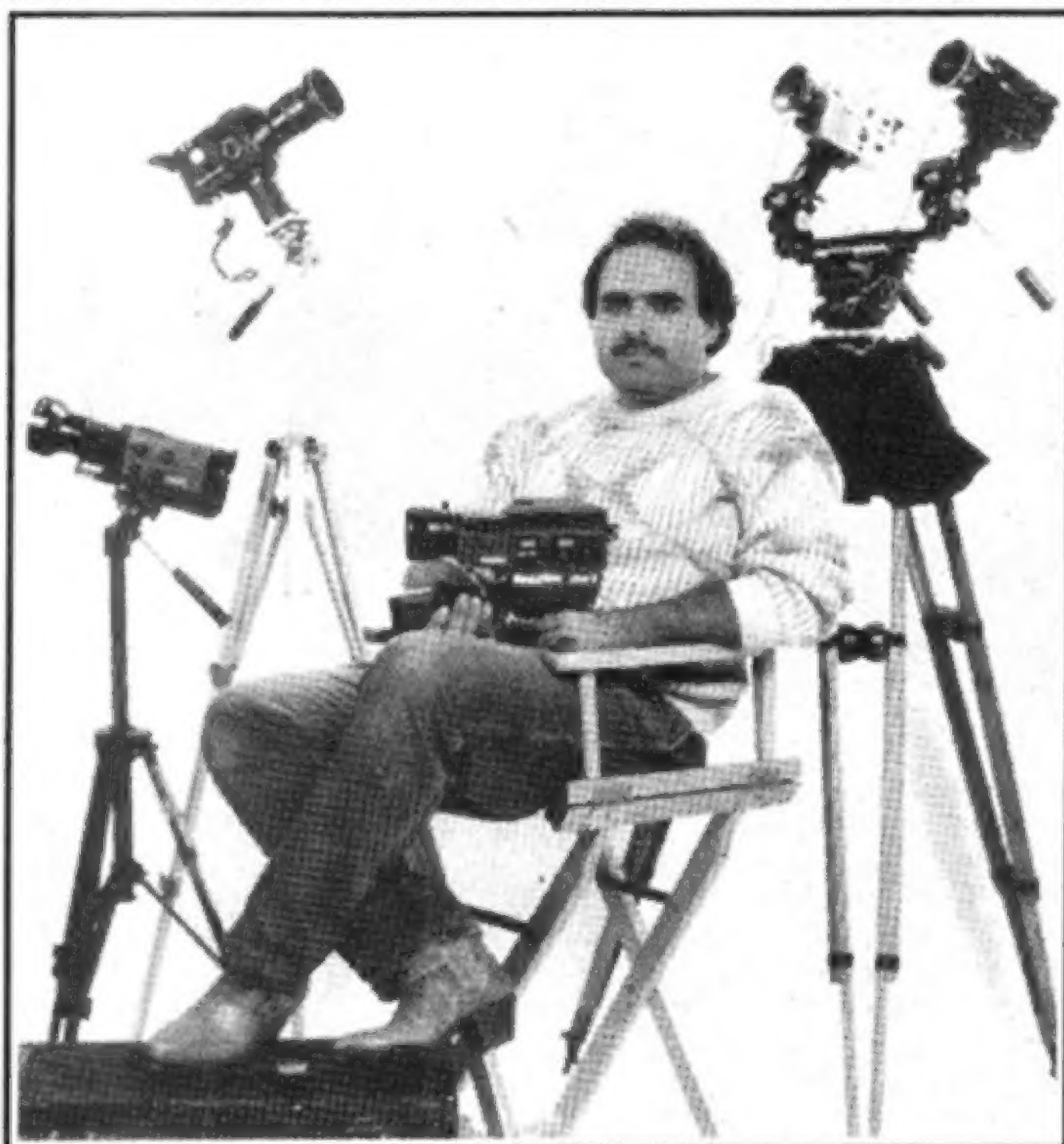
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